LAY RELIGION

LAY RELIGION

BY

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Friends Beyond Seas, The Missionary Spirit and the Present Opportunity, The Way of the Good Physician, The Church's Opportunity in the Present Crisis, Studies in the Epistle to the Hebrews, etc.

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To my Father and Mother.

Yesterday I finished the first draft of this book. To-day I have been wandering on the South Downs, and write this in the midst of one of the most glorious patches of purple heather I have ever seen. I know how you, my Mother, would drink in the beauty of this great expanse of field and wood, of creek and river, stretching away to the blue sea. I know how you, my Father, would rejoice in the wide stretches of grass and moor on your beloved Downs. And I know that you will both share with me the joy of completed work, and that you will allow me to inscribe to you this little volume in deep gratitude for all that your lives have brought to mine. You have unfolded to me the true meaning of earthly parenthood, warm in your approval, kind in your correction, sharing the sorrows and the pleasures of your children. You have let me see something of the rich experience of your fellowship with God in Christ, expressing itself in a life of constant thoughtfulness and loving service for others. But you have never tried to force me to accept your creed. You have expected the best of me, but you have not chafed if that best were not what you would choose. You have helped me to find the Truth, without insisting that it should be your view of truth. So you have led me, step by step, to some understanding of the love of my Father in Heaven, and His way with His children.

This book then, which owes so much to you, I dedicate to you, here in God's great open-air, with the prayer that it may serve to liberate and inspire some of God's children as you have helped and inspired your son.

22nd August, 1918.

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PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

In a few words at the commencement of this volume it is impossible to acknowledge all I owe to other writers and thinkers, and to a number of personal friends who have been good enough to express their frank opinion on my manuscript and to offer valuable suggestions at various stages. Both criticism and encouragement have been appreciated by one who has all along felt himself inadequately equipped for the task he had undertaken. It has been said that "one of the chief wants of the day is a league of ordinary mortals to put the clever people in their proper place," and though I am far from presuming single-handed to attempt such a service, I could certainly claim a right to membership in the league. Such being the case the help given has been welcomed as much as it was needed.

To my wife, who in this, as in all my work, has been a partner and a critic, making all effort a joy, and not content that it should be less than the best of which I was capable;

to the editorial committee who have fulfilled their duties with consideration and kindliness and made my task easier by their approval and their suggestions; to F. H. Hawkins, George Lansbury, A. E. Zimmern, Hugh Martin, W. E. Wilson, A. Neave Brayshaw, Sam Peel, and to others who have read the whole or parts of the manuscript; to Miss May Dobell, who has typed the whole, and who by her efficient and cheerful work has lightened my labours more than she knows, I desire here to record my sense of gratitude and warm appreciation. I have also to thank Mr. A. S. Way for permission to quote two extracts from his valuable translation of the Letters of St. Paul; Mr. Meynell for permission to reproduce a poem by Francis Thompson; and M.B.C. for the use of a sonnet.

The title of this volume was not so much chosen as thrust upon me. When the book was in my mind I came across some articles by a well-known writer in which he held up for his searching satire and denunciation just that which seems to me to need a rebirth to-day if any truly religious revolution is to be achieved. What he called in scorn "lay religion" I venture here to defend and explain, not, I hope in a controversial spirit,

but with a desire to set forth an aspect of truth that may easily be overlooked by the defender of institutional religion.

To some readers I may seem too severe in my references to organised Christianity. Others will find what I have written much too mild. If I have erred in the former sense it is through no lack of appreciation of what I have myself gained from the Churches (my own and others), through no love of criticising (thankless task at the best), and not because I despair of the Churches, but rather that I count them worthy of our best thought, which means frank criticism rather than uncritical approval. If I have erred in the latter sense it is not through blindness to other faults unspecified here, but because I have no interest in mere destruction, and because I am most anxious to avoid wounding where I cannot at the same time suggest a remedy.

On re-reading what I have written I am conscious that with more leisure blemishes might have been removed and a more adequate treatment of the subject rendered possible. In the interstices of a crowded life it is not easy to produce what requires continuous thought. What I care for, more even than a complete and satisfying state-

ment, is that no word should wound, that all that is said may tend to draw together and strengthen the forces of good in the world, and that, even when matters of controversy are treated, some note should sound that brings them into the region where men together seek for the greater and all-inclusive truth, where it is easy to understand and appreciate the spirit of one's opponent, and where the sound of passion and prejudice is stilled.

"From the murmur and the subtlety of
suspicion with which we vex one
another,
Give us rest.
Make a new beginning,
And mingle again the kindred of the
nations in the alchemy of Love,
And with some finer essence of forbearance
and forgiveness
Temper our mind."*

HENRY T. HODGKIN.

20*th October*, 1918.

* From Aristophanes' "Peace," translated by Prof. Nairne.

NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION OF "LAY RELIGION."

Owing to the need for preparing this edition more rapidly than I had expected, I have been unable to do more than make a few very necessary minor corrections. I take the opportunity of expressing my appreciation of the cordial reception accorded to the book by critics in the press, and many from whom I have heard personally. Should a third edition be called for, I shall, I hope, be able to deal with some interesting points raised by them.

H.T.H.

November, 1919.

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INTRODUCTION: THE CHALLENGE OF THE PRESENT SITUATION

Part of the significance of the catastrophe which we are witnessing is that it clears up all confusion on this point. Above all it signalises the complete bankruptcy of the type of Christianity I have described. Help comes to us in the clear recognition of this fact; and a decisive conflict must be joined between these two conceptions of the message of Jesus. This conflict alone will bring peace. Two religions in fact are confronting each other. This became agonisingly plain to me as the catastrophe broke upon us. Among the solemn vows I made in those awful days was the resolve to dedicate every fibre of my strength to this struggle. It shall be, of course, an objective, not a personal struggle, a fight for truth. All ecclesiastical and dogmatic differences fall into the background and vanish entirely. We step forth upon a wider field.—PROFESSOR RAGAZ.

I

INTRODUCTION: THE CHALLENGE OF THE PRESENT SITUATION

We have been told that we are living in critical times so often and so insistently that we have almost come to doubt it. The frequent reiteration of a statement tends to make us sceptical about it, for the method is discovered to be a dodge whereby it is hoped to make people believe the incredible. Nevertheless it is true, that these are critical days. But what is the crisis? Is it the conflict between world Powers? Is it the decision between a militarist Prussia and its pacifist foes? Is it a choice between autocracy and democracy? There is, surely, a deeper crisis, and one which, if we see it truly, must range every man and woman on one side or another of the great conflict. The pity of it is that this deeper issue is not clearly seen. Those from whom we should expect light and leading are, in many cases, blinding men's eyes. Very many, therefore, are, or seem to be, in the camp to which they do not properly belong. There is confusion upon matters of great moment, and one may almost add "the people love to have it so."

The critical question is whether our civilisation is, in the future, to be based on material standards or on spiritual ones. Is

that much used and abused word "reconstruction" to stand for a little better building on the old foundations, a more "efficient" commercialised and militarised educational system, a more perfect training for national (military) service, a better attempt to grease the wheels of the old industrial system, a somewhat sharper criticism of the diplomatic methods that have been discredited, a re-establishment of the organisation of religion with less friction between the sects, and less kicking against the State? Or is the reconstruction to be from the bottom up? Have we really learned our lesson? Have we seen that the foundations of our vaunted civilisation are sand, and that even to build a great deal better on them is but to court fresh disaster?

When you ask men how religion is to affect this task of reconstruction they will shrug their shoulders or laugh outright. This job, they will tell you, is not for religious men or organisations, but for the hard, practical man of business, and for the skilful statesman and politician. It seems to them really absurd to think that "religion" will have any part to play in the great game. The Churches have their own house to put in order. They have said little or nothing, either before August, 1914, or since, to inspire any hope of their having anything to say when the vast problems of peace confront us.

This attitude, almost universal among those not in some way directly connected with Church organisations, is due to a deep and widespread misunderstanding of the nature and meaning of religion, for which the representatives of religion are themselves in large part to blame. The result of this misunderstanding is that thousands of deeply religious people openly and strongly disclaim any connection with religion, while many who are to be found in the Churches are actually standing for a material instead of a spiritual solution of the problems ahead. Even when a great question, with deep moral implications, like the League of Nations, is presented for discussion, it may be questioned whether the average "religious" man really understands or cares about it, and it is obvious that organised religion has not contributed any distinctively Christian point of view to the discussion, though inclined, on broadly humanitarian grounds, to support the most enlightened policy proposed by leading statesmen. The Church, in fact, has no thought-out policy of reconstruction in national or international affairs. She has not even set forth the principles upon which such a policy should be framed. She does not know her own mind, and so can give no sure lead. No one, in fact, expects her to do so.

The world of to-day has been caught in a hurricane which threatens to sweep everything

before it. Like men tramping over the moor when a storm arises, we must choose between shelter and the view. The Church, like almost every other institution, has chosen the shelter and lost the view. It is devoted to making the shelter, which any day may collapse, more secure and more beautiful, in order that all timid souls may be as safe and happy as possible while the storm lasts. It is even trying to join up certain disconnected shelters into one large and more impressive one. So much it is beginning to learn. But playing for safety is not the game for such a great time. The one thing men need to-day is the view. Without it they must perish. Who will venture forth to see, leaving the haunts of security for the wind-swept peak? This should be the special prerogative of the leaders of religious thought and life.

It is said that when an aeroplane goes at less than a certain pace it inevitably falls to the ground. The same is true of the Church. Just when we need her most for scouting, to be eyes indeed to the army of humanity, she is found to have reduced her pace to the danger point, and to be struggling on the ground with the rest of us. Or should we rather say that she has had recourse to another method of aeronautics, and has chosen to follow the "lighter than air" school? Inflated by gas, she maintains an unstable equilibrium in the upper air, swept along

before the hurricane, while the petrol in her tanks is frozen, and all her bombs are exhausted.

Not in scorn, but in pity are these words penned by one who, as a member of one of the Christian Churches, shares the shame of their failure. In writing this volume I have no desire to find fault, to fix blame, or to destroy, save only as such tasks may be incidental to its main constructive purpose. I should have no interest in destroying, even the most effete of human institutions, unless something better could be put in its place. But neither have I any interest in maintaining any that have ceased to serve the cause of humanity. Only time can show whether the Churches have lost their chance. I am not concerned to attempt prophecy, but simply to offer such contribution as I can to the far more fundamental problem of bringing about a reconstruction of our social, educational, international structure that is, in the full sense of the word, religious and spiritual.*

In order to reach this end it is necessary to begin with an examination into what we mean

* It may be well clearly to state that so far, I cannot see any other institution that is likely to do the work the Churches ought to be doing. My criticism, therefore, is firstly in the hope of seeing amendment—a hope encouraged by signs of unrest and life within each of the Churches. Even organised Labour, which may be a great power for betterment, cannot quite step into the gap. At present the plain Christian duty seems to me to be to try to make the Churches what they ought to be.

by religion. It is possible to handle religious questions in one of two ways. We may treat of the science of religion, discuss theological problems, the underlying philosophical conceptions, and the history of the various world religions, their needs, their conflicts, and their development, or degeneration. For such a task I can claim no fitness, nor have I inclination to attempt it. The other method is frankly to start with the human problem, to avoid apologetic or fine spun theories, and to work out from the basis of experience to the practical applications of a religious life. For this task, also, I recognise my own serious limitations.

This book has been in contemplation, in fact, for several years, and has been held back not only because of the difficulty of finding time for it in a crowded life, but not less in the hope that someone else might say the things I have tried to say with much more skill and effect than I can hope to display. This much can, however, be urged in excuse for venturing to add another book to the vast stock on the market. The things here said are the results of personal experience and long thought. From a fairly wide acquaintance with men and women, I am led to believe that they represent a point of view held by a number, but not hitherto very adequately expressed. I can only hope that they may find a fitter embodiment as time goes on.

I am, in fact, concerned not so much with the theory of religion as with its practice. I recognise that the two cannot be separated, yet the emphasis may be on one side or on the other. In this volume I write as a "layman," one to whom his religion means everything, who meets it, as it were, in every decision of life, in the commonplace duty not less than in the decisive moment. I write not as an expert who has learned the art of writing theology, but as a plain man who has tried to think his way through one question after another, and has not been content with the authoritative answer of either book or church. No doubt it is open to criticism ; indeed, no effort has been made to avoid criticism. As a complete philosophy of life it is, no doubt, inadequate ; but behind it there lies a philosophy of life that is at least less inadequate than this expression of it. As a theological treatise it is hardly to be taken account of : yet it contains a latent theology that may yet find fit exposition by some trained mind. What it does claim to be is the raw material of philosophy and theology—the simple confession of faith of one to whom his faith is a living reality. And, being this, it is also, perhaps, a small indication of the uprising of a religious spirit that may sweep away many of the old landmarks, but that will yet bear us forward together on the great incoming tide of a common humanity, knit

together in mutual service and in reverent love.

This book it may be hoped, then, is something more than a personal confession, for I am concerned not with vindicating my own personal position, or my creed (if I may use the term of a religious life that has never found satisfaction in any creed). I am, rather, intensely concerned to see a religious synthesis, a growing together of thought and life around big spiritual ideals, big enough to create a new world. Beginning, then, from those instincts of men's natures which we can fairly call spiritual, I seek to find my way to what the fulfilment of those instincts ought to mean in the individual and in society. I believe this to be a truly scientific method, even if it be not science from the point of view of the theologian.

In its original conception, this volume was to consist of two parts, the first of which would set forth religion in its essence, dealing with the great needs of the human heart, the inadequacy of much current religious teaching to meet those needs, and the line along which the answer is to be found. The second part was to set forth religion in action, showing in detail how the type of religion I have sought to describe will work out in the life of the individual, in the home and in education, in business and professional life, in regard to the industrial system, in the

relation of the sexes, in the treatment of crime, in civic and national government, in international and inter-racial affairs, in the pursuit of art, literature, and all that makes the life of man interesting and worthy. The second part has been omitted owing to lack of time and space, but I have in contemplation a further volume which, with others in this series, may help to supply the need. In the closing chapter I have tried to indicate the point of view from which I should approach these problems. The subsequent volume, "The Christian Revolution," will be an attempt to fill in the details of the picture.

I write as one who lives in a Christian atmosphere, and to whom religious thoughts and aspirations have come, in the main, through Christian channels, though some years in China, and the study of the great sages of that country, have not been without their effect upon my religious thinking. I have not attempted to write an apology for the Christian faith, but, perhaps, in a certain sense, what I have written will appear as an *apologia*. To me Christ has brought the religious message that is satisfying and transforming. That much I know beyond shadow of doubt. This does not mean that I begin or ask others to begin, with any doctrine about Him. I am persuaded that what we need to-day is quite frankly to begin where His disciples began, and see where that will lead

us. This simple exploration of the child spirit will do more to make Christianity a real thing than all the catechisms and creeds of Christendom. This is the standpoint of the following pages. As they are studied, it will be seen where we arrive. I cannot, of course, expect that all who read will arrive exactly where I have done, nor would I wish it. All I wish is that we may have the same spirit, and so be able, whatever differences of opinion may persist, to work together for the new order.

Starting thus, and studying, at first hand, the life of the Carpenter of Nazareth, I have come to see in Him the most revolutionary and daring spirit the world has ever seen. What is seen of Him in our creeds and sacred pictures and hymns and sermons seems often scarce worthy of our respect, still less of our devotion. It is, happily, not impossible to rediscover Him to-day for oneself. That is what I believe we must all set out to do, if we are to get all the strength and light that are within our reach as we seek to create a new and better world. If, however, we see no great necessity to undertake this task at the moment, it need not hold us back from joining in the effort to spiritualise our common life. The forces of labour, the moral drive of the women's movement, the student body eagerly seeking for truth—all these and many more streams of aspiration and effort must

flow into the river upon which we may yet be borne forth into the ocean and on to the City of God.

The danger I foresee is that the idealisms of different groups who are unselfishly seeking that fair city, by whatever name they may call it, may not be merged. If there is conflict, among those who should stand together, the forces of materialism, capitalism, militarism, obstruction, ignorance will triumph again. We may have made a slight apparent advance, but the citadel can never be stormed by isolated and independent actions. We cannot afford to be at cross-purposes in such an hour.

It is to be avoided only by much mutual forbearance, and by deep sympathy, patience and effort at understanding. Further, the blending of elements so diverse, and each so full of originality, of passion and of deep conviction, can only come about when we find one another at the deepest levels of our experience. This is why I plead for a religious synthesis. What I mean by religion I must leave the reader to discover, if he has the patience to do so. I believe he will find the word so defined as to include rather than exclude, and I have even the hope that, on some such basis, there may be a more inclusive combination than has hitherto been seen.

The War has, for me, meant sharp opposition to many of my fellow-Christians and

fellow-countrymen. That this book is the work of a pacifist could not long be hidden even from the reader who has no previous knowledge of the writer's standpoint. That fact may cause some to turn away from it. Yet perhaps it may be well here to avow the "taint"! Pacifism, as I understand it, is not an isolated thing. For me it involves, it is part of, a philosophy of life that practically carries with it all that I have here written. I am not concerned to discuss, in this volume, the issues of the present War. I know that the vast majority were quite as conscientious in supporting it as I in refusing to do so. My political judgment coincided, to a large extent, with that of my friends who went into the army. The particular issue need not be reopened, complicated, as it was, by many considerations that seemed to make a simple "yea" or "nay" almost impossible.

The amount of separation that this position has brought with it has had its advantages. It has helped me to see the organised forces of religion more "from the outside" than was hitherto possible. It has brought me into intimate touch with some of the finer spirits outside the Churches. It has led me very carefully to review my whole religious position. One thing stands out in my mind as a result of this. I have learned to see how very much people may have in common even when they are driven by force of circumstances into

opposite camps. With some who have differed from me on this issue I am still, on almost all others, agreed : with some from very different schools of thought I have found an unsuspected unity. Therefore I hope that what I have to say in this volume may bring together persons who have been driven apart by political events, or by social distinctions, and that it may help towards a truer alignment of forces when the war issue is cleared away.

"Now God be thanked who matched us with this hour," sang Rupert Brooke. To how many have these words come back as the expression of an uprising sense of the greatness of life in these great days! Our soul expands as we catch here and there the vision of the time that yet shall be. Another Cambridge man, a fellow of my own college, in addressing the young men of England and of the world, says : "Believe in the future, for none but you can. Believe in the impossible, for it waits the help of your hands to become the inevitable."* In some such daring faith, with glad hearts and eager hands, let us stretch forth to seize this hour ere it pass. In doing so, we have need to find ourselves, to be ourselves, and to give ourselves. Truly to do this is to find God. And to find God is to give ourselves to God. Nothing less is sufficient. Nothing more is possible.

* G. Lowes Dickinson in "The War and After," p. 19.

THE RIGHTS OF THE UNLEARNED

At that season Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes.—*The Gospel according to Matthew.*

Mark, my brothers, by what instruments God called you. Very few of the wise—wise with human wisdom—very few of the mighty, of the high-born few, have been bearers of the Call. Nay, God chose out the unwisdom of the world, that its success in regenerating humanity might put to shame the philosophies that had failed in the task : the strengthless ones of the world God chose out, that their success might put to shame the strong rulers who had failed. The lowly born of the world, the things contemned, God chose them out—ay, and agencies whose very existence was unsuspected, that by their success He might show the futility of existing systems, that no human agency might, in the presence of God, boast of success.

Paul's Letter to the Corinthians, tr. by A. S. Way.

II

THE RIGHTS OF THE UNLEARNED

Two ideas of religion are always at war with one another, the esoteric idea and the democratic idea. According to the former, religion is thought of as a cult into which a man must be initiated by certain rites. There are certain persons set apart from the common herd who have a prerogative of religious truth. The judgment of the plain man on broad issues of right and wrong must be submitted to that of the specialist. Certain places and days are set apart as holy, that is, as fenced off from the rest of life for special religious acts. The language of the market must not find its way into the temple, the result being that the kind of conduct set forth in the temple is neither found nor expected in the market.

According to the other idea, religion is a necessary part of every man's life. That is not to say that every man is religious in the conventional sense—far from it, thank God! It simply means that any idea of religion which is limited to the few is, from the nature of the case, false, and that our whole conception of religion must be checked by the

psychology of the human soul. Understand man—any man—and you will find the meaning of religion. Begin with yourself, in this great search, and you cannot fail, if there be a God, to end with your God. This is democratic religion. It claims the whole of life, week-day and Sunday alike. It claims market not less than temple. It claims layman not less than priest. It claims sinner, not less than saint.

This idea of religion does not exclude revelation. It only excludes exclusive channels of revelation. It does not shut out God from His universe; it discovers Him everywhere. It will not limit Him to any one class or creed or church.

The modern world is coming to see that human society cannot be rightly ordered on the basis of the few governing the many. Even the most benevolent autocracy is not the final goal. The free association of free men and women working out together a common life in mutual service and joint adventure is a far grander conception of society than even the best ordered state in which, through perfect laws and perfect obedience, the will of one, or of the few becomes the rule for all.

This being the goal which advanced thinkers accept for society, what kind of goal have we for the Church? Religion and politics must converge if the Kingdom of God is ever to be

realised. The political ideal must become more religious ; the religious ideal must concern itself with society, it must, in fact, become more political. The tendency of thought that leads towards a political democracy leads also towards a democratic religion. Impatience towards bureaucrats breeds impatience towards hierarchs. The religious specialist may have a sphere, like any other specialist ; but he must submit to the supreme judgment of the common man. He must be his servant, and not his master.

It is frequently said that what we need to-day is a religious awakening. It must not be forgotten that every great religious awakening has been a revolt against authority. It has practically been the assertion by the common man of his rights in that which has been fenced off for a privileged class, an appeal back to that sense of right and wrong, that inherent faculty for intercourse with God, which is the common possession of the race. The privileged person is always afraid of losing his position of privilege, and this means, in matters of religion, that he fears the conscience of the "uninstructed" individual. "Unlimited liberty to any individualism that calls itself conscience, even in a Christian man, is an impossible thing, because it is sheer atomism, ending in self-will ; and it is ruinous to a community, which, as the supremacy of the Kingdom of God shows, is

the first Christian consideration. . . . . Loyalty to Church or State is the form in which loyalty to conscience is most safe and effective."* Such is always the voice of the chosen few who are afraid of the winds of God that will carry us out far into the uncharted ocean. But where would the Church be to-day if it had not been for those who construed their loyalty to conscience in a diametrically opposite, if less "safe" way?

There are three kinds of persons who may be spoken of as "religious specialists"—the priest, the theologian and the "saint." The claim of the priest, whether in Christianity or in any other religion, is to certain prerogatives which he possesses by virtue of his appointment. This may come through mystic rites, through laying on of hands, or through apostolic succession. However it is conferred, any exclusive or even any special kind of access to the sources of illumination creates a class distinction. Its inevitable result is to place a gulf between clerical and lay, and to create a sense of religious inferiority on the part of the latter. We cannot expect so much of a layman as of a priest. Two types of profession and of conduct are assumed. One is judged by a higher standard than the other. Whether it be by celibacy, or by a peculiar form of dress, there is need

* "The Christian Ethic of War," by P. T. Forsyth, p. 65.

to mark off your religious élite from the man in the street.

The claim of the theologian to be a specialist rests upon his superior knowledge. He is a student of the ways of God. He speaks with the authority of the schools. We defer to him because he knows the original languages in which the Scriptures were written, because he has taken a special course of training, and because he speaks in a language highly technical, and often almost unintelligible. His latest advocate pours scorn on the "moral amateur," who attempts to carry out uninstructed the plain teaching of Christ. The "conscience amateur and scrupulous" is to be feared as a guide presumably in order that we may enthrone the professional conscience—a conscience which, in the present instance, bids us "recognise the first-rateness of the second best," whatever that may mean, and tells us that "casuistry everyone has to practise; the question is whether we should use amateur or skilled."*

The saint, if he be a true saint, makes for himself no claim to be a specialist in the sense in which that claim is made by priest and theologian. A false idea of sainthood exists, however, which assumes that a peculiar holiness attaches to those who live apart from the world, not subject to ordinary temptations. The monk or nun is, of course, not

* P. T. Forsyth, *op. cit.*, pp. 127 ff. *et passim*, and p. 19.

the only type. Perhaps even worse is the pious individual whose religion is made up of negations, and who gives the impression of drab ultra-seriousness which repels rather than attracts. Such "saints" form an order superior to others because of the external conditions of their life, or because of a temperament so different from our own as to be rare and unapproachable. This unique type of life or character is one that may charm us like a lovely picture; it is to be admired in a stained-glass window; but it has no place in business or politics, and inspires despair rather than emulation.* It is to this false idea of sainthood that exception must be taken. Our common thought of the saint as a "religious specialist" centres round such unique and often dehumanised species.

A further grave objection to the dominance of the "religious specialist," and, more particularly, that of the priest or theologian, is that religion is thus made the speciality of the male sex. A priesthood closed to women can never be a fitting medium for a religion that claims the entire life of mankind, that finds its glory in the home, that beautifies the simplest household duty, and that lifts the relation of men and women to one another

* Cf. "Religious Genius," L. Swetenham. The true saint is found everywhere, but is seldom recognised. He is a proof of our argument, for he is made out of the common stuff of life.

to the highest plane. This relationship is a chief factor in the social life. If religion is to permeate that social life, it must be equally mediated through the personalities of men and women.

A religion that is simply mediated to the common man through priest, theologian or "saint" is doomed to failure. It tricks men into the belief that religion is a thing apart from life as they know it. It can never become the great moving and inspiring force that will lift the whole of human life into a higher region of achievement. It produces a "moral bimetallism" which is fatal to the best living, both for the specialist, who is put into a glass case, and made to seem a demi-god (a most unhealthy form of existence, as Paul saw at Lystra), and for the common man, who leaves aside as unapproachable the higher demands, which, if they mean anything, are meant for everyone.

The effect of this "esoteric" religion is felt in many different ways, and it is almost as serious in nonconformity and protestantism as it is in conformity and catholicism. It gives the sense that religion is behind the times, unaware of the big change in men's thoughts in regard to society and government. It leaves very many with the conviction that, while religion is all very well for the parson and the squire, it is none of their concern. It leaves the way open for all the innumerable

compromises that have come to be associated with "official" Christianity.*

"Democratic" religion, on the other hand, asserts that, in this sense, there is no such thing as religious specialisation. The priest cannot claim any authority, by virtue of his office, which separates him and his class from all who love the Lord in sincerity and truth. The theologian cannot claim an authority over conduct by virtue of knowledge, because it is still true that the mysteries of the Kingdom have been revealed to "babes." The saint is not a person in a class apart, called to live a holier life than the housewife or the business man. Sainthood is the prerogative of the humblest, and is open to every true man and woman in the wide earth.

The Protestant Reformation began in a revolt from the priestly tyranny, and an assertion of democratic religion. But the growth of Protestant Churches has resulted in a continual tendency to get back to the esoteric idea. The authority of the priest has given way, but the authority of the professional minister and the scholar has taken its place. The result is that common men and women do not regard religion as their

* One or two ministerial friends who have seen this chapter have suggested that it should be clearly stated that they and other ministers fully share this view. It is well to make this abundantly clear. It is not the criticism simply of a layman as opposed to ministers and clergy, but of an assumption frequently underlying the distinction.

own concern. They think of it as something which appeals to a small minority in the community. To be "religious" is to be unnatural, a little aloof from the life we all live. To speak of religion is to assume a position of superiority. For nine-tenths of our people in ninety-nine hundredths of their lives "religion" is never thought of. It is not to be opposed: it is simply irrelevant.

The evangelical revival was a call back to personal religion. Its central appeal was for an individual choice, and it threw the whole onus upon the individual. No one could save him from the burden of the great decision. To this extent it was a movement in the right direction, a revolt against institutionalism. Its weakness lay in the undue emphasis thrown upon one or two critical moments. Having once been "converted" and "sanctified" there was a tendency to think that all was accomplished. People tried to live by the light of a past experience rather than in the strength of a present one. It further tended in some cases to an excessive emotionalism, without making a sufficient demand upon each person to think out his own position. Thus the convert became ultimately subservient to the evangelist or theologian, instead of learning to stand upon his own feet. Democratic religion must make a bigger demand upon the intellect of each one, just as democratic

government does. An ignorant Church will always be at the mercy of the trained minority. Excessive emphasis upon the one or two great religious crises has the same kind of effect as that just referred to ; it concentrates the essence of religion in great emotional storms, and creates the idea that, for the rest of life, religion is comparatively irrelevant.

Now, this sense that religion is irrelevant, that the Church, or even that Christ, has little or nothing to do with our common affairs, is the natural result of the esoteric idea which has crept back into Protestantism in other forms. But it is simply and utterly disastrous. Religion claims the whole of life, the life of the community as well as that of the individual, the life of the home and the workshop, the mine and the factory, not one whit less than the life of the communion table and the holiness convention. The idea of a religion that cannot make good this claim is a fatally defective idea. The dominance of the "religious specialist" must be swept away. The layman, the unlearned, the average man (if there be such a creature) must claim his right and take his place, not simply as one to be initiated but as the leader of a truly democratic religion.

It will be urged that this is the age of the specialist, and that, in every department of human knowledge, we have to recognise that he has come to stay. In science and in art

we no longer look for any man who can speak on every branch of the subject. Specialisation is increasingly necessary as the area of our knowledge broadens. Every new discovery increases our dependence on the man who knows one thing really well.

This is true enough of the several departments of knowledge, and it is true of Biblical criticism, or of Church history. But it cannot ever be true of religion. Religion is the art of living itself, the knowledge which is life eternal. Some may excel in this supreme art, in this fundamental science. But the door to excellence is open to all. We cannot depend upon the specialist. To do so is to destroy the very basis on which religion is built. Secondhand religion is no religion. It is the wretched makeshift, the stone which is made to do duty for bread by those who would hold for themselves a unique position they fear to lose. The basis of all true religion is an individual moral choice, and a personal relationship to God. From the nature of the case, the choice cannot be exercised by another, and the relationship cannot be maintained through another. If I hand over my moral choice to a priest or a theologian, I surrender that which makes me a religious being. If I seek to maintain my relationship to God through a rite or a person, whatever his office, I virtually throw away my own prerogative of direct access to God

at any time and in any place, I become a spiritual parasite, I sell my birthright for a mess of pottage. Such an attitude destroys the one foundation on which true religion can be built.

It has become necessary, if religion is to become once again the tremendously relevant and active force that it has been in the great creative ages of history, to challenge with the utmost vigour all that savours of the esoteric idea. This was what Jesus Christ did. He drove the "religious specialist" right off the field. The specialist was there in force. Looked at through the stinging epithets of Jesus, he seems to us a particularly disagreeable animal. But he is with us to-day as arrogant as ever, as ready to bind burdens on others which he is himself unwilling to lift with his little finger. Jesus saw the outcast and harlot entering the Kingdom of Heaven before the "religious specialist." To-day we assume that the spiritual progeny of these specialists will get there first. We lie down under their supposed authority and knowledge. The champion of the common man is needed again to-day to shiver this tyranny with the shafts of simple, unadulterated truth.

This is not to say a word against individuals, even against those most closely associated with this assumption. Many are people of splendid life, and filled with the love of their fellow-men. But, so far as they are under

the heel of the system to which they are bound, they are, as individuals, to be pitied, as representatives of the system, to be repelled. Religion cannot be reborn in our midst save as the faith of the common man, the glorious simple thing that all can share alike, that meets man's every need, that transfigures everyday tasks, that is passed from one to another, in market place and factory, that enters into and transforms our social life, our industrial system, our politics, our international relations, our inter-racial intercourse. This was the kind of religion Jesus brought to men. As we find this out, we come to see how great He is. The world of to-day has no place for a religious teacher who is merely concerned in bolstering up respectability, or in preparing a select few for a life of happiness hereafter. It wants someone who is big enough to face vested interests, conventional clap-trap, rooted prejudices, easy compromises, and great social evils. That is the kind of teacher we have in Jesus of Nazareth. What His challenge means for to-day, in what way He speaks to the actual needs of common men and women to-day in our work-a-day world, we shall seek to discover in the following pages.

THE DEMAND FOR REALITY

O World invisible, we view thee,
O World intangible, we touch thee,
O World unknowable, we know thee,
Inapprehensible, we clutch thee!

Does the fish soar to find the ocean,
The eagle plunge to find the air—
That we ask of the stars in motion
If they have rumour of thee there?

Not where the wheeling systems darken,
And our benumbed conceiving soars!—
The drift of pinions, would we hearken,
Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors.

The angels keep their ancient places:—
Turn but a stone, and start a wing!
'Tis ye, 'tis your estrangèd faces,
That miss the many-splendoured thing.

But (when so sad thou canst not sadder)
Cry;—and upon thy so sore loss
Shall shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder
Pitched between Heaven and Charing Cross.

Yea, in the night, my Soul, my daughter,
Cry,—clinging Heaven by the hems;
And lo, Christ walking on the water,
Not of Genesareth, but Thames!

FRANCIS THOMPSON.

III

THE DEMAND FOR REALITY

A MAN'S religion is not the creed he professes, or the things he can postulate about God. It is the few simple and elementary convictions by the strength of which he lives. He may have many beautiful ideals which can be displayed in the shop-window, or advertised from the pulpit. These are his religious window-dressing—the things he wishes his neighbours to regard as his religion, or, it may be, the things he is trying all the time to persuade himself to regard as such. His life may be a long battle between the beliefs by which he lives, and the beliefs by which he would like to live, or by which he would like to be thought to live. But his religion is part of the man himself : it never can be the suit of clothes he wears in public, and least of all his Sunday best.

For the first requirement in religion is reality. Words that are not backed by deeds are not only of little value, they are positively harmful. The glib expression of truths by persons whose lives are manifestly at variance

with those truths is worse than the utterance of untruths from the same lips. It is not simply that the truth is denied by the life; it is desecrated, and made to appear as untruth. Such profession debases the moral currency. It largely accounts for the very prevalent conviction that the teaching of Jesus is impracticable. The very people who are responsible for setting forth this teaching in the world are not, in many cases, seriously attempting to live by it.

It is not suggested that the representatives of religion are, in more than a very few cases, consciously insincere. What often happens is something more subtle. There is an inward compulsion to set forth only the highest ideal; to do less seems to be disloyal to Christ. Yet sins of pride and temper, jealousy and self-seeking creep in. As they are recognised the question arises, "Shall my profession be lowered to adapt itself to my known weakness, or shall I ignore this and still proclaim the highest?" To preach the truth with power seems to demand superior knowledge and attainment. Will not the authority of the preacher be fatally weakened if he takes his stand alongside of ordinary frail mortals? Yielding to such a temptation means, in fact, a fatal loss of moral authority.

The worst thing is not the extent of the individual failure, but the sense of the utter

unreality of a religious profession which is the inevitable result. The best spirits feel it most keenly.

The conscience of the plain man is offended by a Church, rich in great endowments, paying princely salaries to its leaders, and still professing to follow the Son of Man who had not where to lay His head. It does not take any argument to prove to a man who has been in the trenches that "war is hell," and, while he may be perfectly satisfied that a pagan State such as our own was bound to embark even in this hell in order to avoid something worse, he cannot see how the Church can proclaim such an enterprise "holy." No one who has been in modern business supposes that the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount are brought into play in order to create huge fortunes, and yet the pews of our churches and chapels are filled with the successful men of business, and they are given the places of chief honour.

Let it be clear that this is not to say that there are not sincere followers of Christ among Church leaders, soldiers and successful men of business. The point is that, in all these, and in many other spheres of life, there is a manifest discrepancy between the truths that are regarded as the foundation of our religion, and the whole plan by which men who profess these truths are actually ordering their lives. It is this radical discrepancy that must be

faced by anyone who wants to save religion, and to see it once again a great power in the world.

The fact is, the jargon of religion has got the better of us. We are obsessed by the idea that the utterance of beautiful truths is in itself valuable and uplifting. We have to learn that it is utterly immoral and debasing when we are not letting those truths have sway in our lives. Many people go to Church as they go to the theatre. They want to have a "religious" sensation. They hear a fine sermon, they join in a beautiful service, they sing inspiring hymns, and they go away feeling that they have done something good. The exact opposite may be the case. If the hymns have been sung, and the prayers prayed, without an entrance into the experience suggested, the effect will have been actually harmful. The religious sense has been tickled. Something in the hearers has answered these truths. They have a feeling of satisfaction because they are not dead to the appeal, because in them there is at least the power to recognise the beauty and the truth of what they hear.

But it never occurs to many of them that to hear in this way is to carry forward to another stage the process of destroying those very faculties on the presence of which they still plume themselves. These are they who, saying "Lord, Lord," shall

yet hear the words, " Depart from me, for I never knew you."*

For those to whom religion is a profession, the danger is still greater. Week after week they are bound to produce so much exhortation, so many moral maxims. To many this is an unspeakable and bitter bondage. But it is one from which it seems impossible to escape. They are placed in a false position, put into a pulpit lifted above their fellows, and looked up to as representatives of God. Human nature often cannot stand the strain. In some there is a conscious revolt against the whole system. Others become used to it, and their state is the more desperate. It is difficult indeed not to fall into the temptations of professionalism. The truth is uttered glibly, and without any clear conception of what it would imply if it were really put into action. Or it is withheld, in whole or in part, lest it should offend the wealthy and influential members of the congregation. Or it is fenced around with all the arguments of expediency, so that it may hurt no one's feelings.

The position is the more difficult because, in these days of the reconstruction of all our world of thought, we cling fearfully to the

* In this connection note the first two chapters of Romann Paul, with consummate skill, pictures the vice of the heathee world, and then, having produced in his Jewish reader th,. sense of abhorrence, turns upon him with the accusing truths to show him that his power of moral judgment condemns not the other man but *himself*.

outworn expressions of faith, the dogmas, the creeds, the confessions, that are couched in archaic terms, and that are tinged with the flavour of bygone controversies. The professional minister is, in some sort, tied to these. As a young man he sits at the feet of his professor or bishop, and imbibes the doctrine of the schools. As his mind matures, he finds himself in bondage to a creed he has not fashioned from his own experience, and which it becomes increasingly difficult to defend, still less to make the starting-point of any great religious appeal.

These facts are well known to all, but are not given anything like the weight they deserve in considering the present religious situation. The demand for reality is fundamental, and there is a very widespread feeling that you have not got reality in the very bodies that ought, above all others, to stand for it, and in the one subject that must be handled in sincerity if it is to have any value whatever for the life of man. Ask anyone you meet whether there is more sincerity, more fearless acceptance of truth, in religion or in, say, science or engineering, and the answer will not be for one moment in doubt. We are not dealing with the few fearless scholars, or with the few Christian socialists who are facing quite bravely modern thought or the actual conditions of the modern world. Such there are, and to them we give all honour.

But it is matter for common knowledge that the ordinary presentation of religion is not *real*. It is surrounded with subterfuge and sham; it is associated with mediæval ceremonies; it is couched in language that is out-of-date, and meaningless to any who have not been brought up to drink it in; it is careful to run away from the things that really matter. The "religious" man lives in a world of his own making, and it seems to the common man an unreal world—a world of shams.

Jesus Christ faced just such a situation. He found His way to the hearts of the people —simple peasants and fishers and tax-gatherers and prostitutes. Why? Because He dealt with things as they are. He discarded the fine-spun theory, the religious jargon. He spoke of every-day things in the language of every-day life. He pierced the shams and half-truths. He brought people face to face with themselves and their neighbours, not with hypothetical situations and unreal problems. The Sabbath had been fenced about by all kinds of unreal rules and restrictions. Jesus went behind these to its real purpose, and so declared His right to heal men on the Sabbath, and the right of His disciples to pluck corn. He was dealing with the inner spirit of the institution, not with its make-believe clothes, and He saw that "the Sabbath was made for man, and not

man for the Sabbath." Those who despoiled widows' houses and for a pretence made long prayers were brought into the blaze of truth. The immoral subterfuge by which duty to parents was evaded under the cloak of service to God was laid bare in a few searching words. What Jesus cared about was not that men and women should be regarded as "religious," but that they should be true to themselves and to their fellow-men.

How are we to-day to get back to reality in the things of the Spirit? Our case is desperate indeed if we cannot succeed in the endeavour. The point at which to begin is the basal conviction that every man is essentially religious. His fundamental demands on life are religious, and are only to be met by a religious faith in the largest sense of the word. Every man has some religion: that is to say, he has certain beliefs that shape his actions. These beliefs may be unworthy or false. If so, his actions will be degrading and mischievous. "By their fruits ye shall know them" may be applied in this sense. A man's actions reveal his religion far more than the religious terms he uses.

For many people there is a haunting sense of unreality about all religious talk. It does not seem to belong to life as they know it. It is a thing apart. They have been taught, perhaps, to think no life is a true one that has not a religious element, and, therefore, they

try to discover in themselves something that corresponds to their idea of religion. They may succeed to a certain extent, and thus they come to cultivate a "religious" sense, and a religious part of their life, and they sincerely believe that they have thus "got religion." Upon others the reaction is precisely opposite. They are revolted by the whole presentation of religion, and come to the conclusion that they, at any rate, are not religious—and no worse for the fact. They see plenty of people who, without making any religious profession, live very decent lives, and they come to the conclusion that they will at least avoid the error of professing more than they practise. In some cases they make a profession of a good deal less than they really believe, which, in its own way, is another form of insincerity.

Either result is deplorable. Neither can be avoided until we see religion in a new light, as the thing that makes a man what he is—not that fits him out with a certain intellectual suit of clothes. When we see religion in this light, the kind of religion a man has becomes a supremely important matter. If a man's religion is simply the thing that works itself out in his daily life, and creates his character, no one can be indifferent as to the kind of religion he has. He begins to examine not the creed he can repeat but the ideals and convictions that are shaping his life. We

must get back through our actions, our choices, both our conscious and our subconscious ones, to our actual faith. The way a man acts in an emergency, his reaction to any trivial happening, the temper he shows at home or in business—these are the sure indications of his religion. If he is to discover his own religion, he must probe inward from his acts to his real self. Then he sees the nakedness of the land. He can no longer hide behind a comfortable creed, or shelter in Mother Church and her efforts on his behalf—not even in a Saviour who has done something *for* him, but who has done nothing *to* him.

The sense of unreality in religious teaching is further deepened by the knowledge that those who set forth the doctrines have not themselves to face the real difficulties of applying them. It is not in the life of the clergy and ministers that the real problem of running the world on Christian principles is presented in its most acute form. In the life of the labourer, in the stress of business competition, in the problems of the politician seeking to exercise his highest influence as a member of a party and in relation to a constituency, in the moral perplexities of lawyer or doctor, these critical questions of duty have to be solved. This is not to assume that the minister has not his own problem: he certainly has; but it is a different problem.

The business man wants to know how business is to be made Christian. The politician has to strive for the christianisation of State activities. There is a feeling that he cannot get the help he needs from men who have no first-hand knowledge of his particular problem. It is not that he wants specific directions, but he does want an understanding which will enable the exponent of religion to state the problem, and lay down the general principles on which it can be solved. Perhaps this difficulty can only be met by a great increase of lay ministry, and by making some training for and experience of work in an ordinary sphere of life part of the essential preparation of every minister.

We have further to recognise that this unreality is the direct outcome of timidity and unbelief. The man who really believes what he professes to believe, and who has the courage of his convictions, gives to others a sense of reality, and helps men to see that religion is relevant to all of life. Comparatively few people are consciously insincere. Multitudes give the appearance of insincerity. What happens is that, by infinitesimal stages, we adapt our actions to circumstances, and accept the argument of expediency. We find the difficulty of doing all we know we ought to do. We see the world is not made so as to tolerate men who really live by the beliefs we profess and want to believe. We dare not

take the consequences of so living. We have not that utter conviction of the truth of our position which makes us unafraid before a whole world opposed to us.

What is the result ? Either we give up our faith, which seems to be the only honest course, or we hold on to it by lip-service, which seems to be in line with our higher selves, and find some justification for our surrender to the world. Moral hairsplitting is as old as religion. It is concerned largely with the construction of easy bridges between that which the religious intuition demands of us, and that which the world, as we find it, seems able to stand. " Man cultivates," says Romain Rolland, " the vices that are profitable to him, but feels the necessity of legitimatising them. Being unwilling to sacrifice them, he must idealise them. That is why the problem at which he has never ceased to labour . . . has been to harmonise his ideals with his own mediocrity. He has always succeeded."*

Once embark on this attractive path, and we become the victims of our own desires. If there be a supreme moral demand, it must be a perilous thing to whittle it away by the argument of expediency. Our great need, then, is simple moral courage. Let us face the situation as it is. To conceal by camouflage the wide discrepancy between the faith we profess and the faith we live by is

* " Above the Battle," p. 108.

to walk on the edge of a precipice, and a great moral catastrophe is inevitable.

To sum up, men are fundamentally religious. The essentially religious demand is for reality. When unreality invades religion, the very foundations of the life of man are being sapped, or, to change the simile, the wells from which we should draw the water of life are poisoned. This is what has happened in our day. The great need of our time is to shatter this unreality, and bring men back to truth. The way to find the truth is for each of us candidly to examine his own actions, and from them deduce what his actual religion is. From that starting-point, and from that alone, can we begin to find our way to the religion by which we ought to live.

THE DEMAND FOR ADVENTURE

" I doubt if his mother ever realises the way that boy loves her . . . he will have to wait till the thirty-first of April before he can show her what is in his heart."

" The thirty-first of April," Sally repeated in bewilderment, " why—why, there's no such thing ! "

" There's no such date in the calendar, if that's what you mean," said Katharine Brough, smiling, " but, thank heaven there *is* in life ! You're very young, Sally, but it must have come to you sometimes already—a day all alight with its own possibilities."

Sally's eyes widened, but she said nothing.

" On the thirty-first of April you attempt the impossible, and you succeed ; it is a day of enterprise, and of dreams come true. It seems entirely outside of ordinary existence, beyond the reach of common standards, a day when you take just that step farther that makes all the difference in life. You feel more intensely, speak straight from the heart, and dare everything."

" It wouldn't come often," breathed Sally.

" No, but when it does come all sudden and shining the thing is to recognise it, to seize it before it passes by for ever."

" I think I know," said Sally softly.

" Of course you do : everybody does. It was just a whim of mine to give it a name. Whenever the day comes, it is full of the spirit of Spring time, and that is why I let it fall in April."—From " Tinker's Hollow " by MRS. CRICHTON.

IV

THE DEMAND FOR ADVENTURE

MAN'S nature, at any rate in youth, and even in many to old age, is not satisfied without an element of adventure. This demand is met, to a large extent, in vicious ways. The prevalence of gambling in all parts of the world is a witness to what is sometimes called a "craving" for excitement. The fierce competition of the business world provides satisfaction for others. Many can find satisfaction only vicariously by the sensational novel, the theatre, the picture house, the football match. To comparatively few is it given to find satisfaction for this instinct in scientific invention and research, or in venturing to the unknown parts of the earth, in polar expeditions or African exploration. How few and how uninteresting are those who have no such passion for adventure! It may well be questioned if there are really any, for often those from whom you would least expect it have some hidden source of excitement which in part meets the need, while outwardly they seem to be the height of respectability and conformity.

When the call comes for volunteers for a great cause, the smug people whose lives have fitted perfectly into the machine, and who have almost lost their early enthusiasms, always seem amazed to discover how many there are who will come forward to engage even in a terribly risky enterprise. The call of Garibaldi to his followers in Rome, the summons to the Crusades, the appeal of St. Francis, the call for volunteers in the first months of the great war—how surprising the response seems when we think of the apparent satisfaction of the masses in a very ordinary life!

The fact is, we constantly misjudge human nature, and misjudge it by the lower instead of by the higher. It is assumed that people want safety as a prime demand, and so the religions of the world announce as their first great boon what is called salvation,* a word which is commonly identified with safety, though it should be given a much larger and better meaning. But the finest spirits do not want to play for safety; they delight to stake all on some great throw; their supreme joy is to be found in facing odds for high ends at whatever risk. And the thing we chiefly forget is that this does not apply to a few. It is the common heritage of our race. Quite ordinary men have in them the passion to do

* In the Aramaic language which Jesus spoke, the word for 'salvation" means literally "life," cf. John x. 10.

something big, to excel, to take the consequences of a great adventure. It is this which marks man out as something more than an animal ; it is his spiritual nature calling from the deep.

No religion can make its full appeal to man unless it recognises this instinct. The religion of Jesus Christ, as commonly understood by men to-day in this country, seems entirely to miss the mark here. It stands for middle-class respectability. When a man wants to settle down in life, he begins to turn to Church-going, along with the other decent conventions of an uninspired civilisation. The wild days are over, the time has come to control the instincts towards revolt, the impatience with the settled order. He will ally himself now with the bulwark of the State, the upholder of things as they are. He joins the Church.

Nor is this less true in regard to moral adventure. The Church frankly does not stand, in the eye of the man in the street, for any great moral adventure. How could it ? To make such an adventure means to risk a great deal, to lose popularity and respectability, to throw over the very position the Church has made for itself by long years of timidity and compromise. How scandalised Society would be if the Church really came out with indignant and damning denunciation of vested interests ! How uncom-

fortable it would be to sit in the pews if it were seen that Christianity means not patronising the under-dog but standing in with him! What place would the bosom-friend of cheats and prostitutes have among your deacons?

Yes, what the so-called "religious" man fears is often not so much sin as the consequences of sin, not moral contamination, but the appearance of it. To stand for right against wrong means "facing the music." It means taking your courage in both hands, and seeing, it may be, your reputation and your respectability go by the board. It means being misunderstood and vilified and spat upon. It may bring upon one the terrible curse of social ostracism! But it is a great and glorious adventure.

The chief characteristic of the early Church seems to have been boldness. We find it on page after page of the Acts of the Apostles. Now, frankly, is that the chief characteristic of the Church as we know it? Is it indeed a characteristic that any ordinary man would mention at all? It does not strike most people as a bold brave thing to do to become associated with a Church—to turn religious. No, but it ought to. It ought to be the greatest adventure on which a man or woman can embark. It ought to enlist him in a warfare so splendid, so full of the joy of battle, so wildly adventurous, that all the highest instincts of his nature rise up within

him to take hold of this great thing, and see it through in some worthy way. Until it does this it will fail, and fail miserably.

The ghastly mistake that is made by our "religious specialists" is that they so often take men at their lowest; they assume that they will not respond to a great demand, they appeal to their timidity instead of to their courage, telling them to escape from danger when they should be calling them into it, and telling them to run away from shame when they ought to be courting it.

Not so Jesus of Nazareth. He did not ask men to save their lives, but to lose them. He held up the cross—that sign of all that was most shameful and degrading—as their goal; and we have made it a pendant for the watch-chains of the highly respectable! Oh, how utterly we have missed the mark! We should be nearer it by wearing the broad-arrow, as many conscientious objectors are doing in these days, or to follow that young man who, when he refused to enlist in the early days of the war, and was decorated by his girl friends with a white feather, wore it all day long "that so he might share the reproach of Christ."

Think of the call of Jesus to the rich young ruler. He was a man of rectitude and position, secure alike in the performance of his duty and in the possession of his wealth. What Jesus feared in him was just this security. He did not call him so much to

poverty as to danger. The great question was, had he got it in him to stake all, to make the supreme venture of poverty and association with the wandering Teacher? When he turned away, the word of Jesus to His disciples was, "How hard is it for them that *trust in* riches to enter into the Kingdom of God." Jesus saw that his sense of security was a menace to his highest interests. He did not, of course, wish to take away the moral habits which gave him that sense in relation to inner things, but He did make a demand that, if responded to, would involve his throwing himself utterly upon God's care, and cutting away the wealth that gave him an insurance, as it were, for this life.

The very idea of faith in the mind of Jesus is an idea of venture. It is a big, brave step into the unknown. It is not acting simply on grounds that can be reasonably established, but it is stepping out beyond, not, indeed, into anything unreasonable, but into the world that lies beyond reason.

> "The men of the East may watch the skies
> And signs and seasons mark;
> But the men signed with the Cross of Christ
> Go gaily in the dark!"

But Jesus not only called men to adventure. His was the most splendidly adventurous life ever man lived. How pale and feeble a description of His life is that word "sinless" so often used as descriptive of it, and disputed

and defended. His was a magnificent experiment in a new type of living, and a new way of conquering evil.* He had to tilt against convention, respectability, the vested interests in temple traffic, the highly honoured leaders of culture and "religion," the compromises and sophistries by which men robbed their fellows in the name of God, the self-esteem, the false standards, the traditions associated with the great names in the national history.

What has He in common with the negative attitude of modern religion towards life? To most men religion is seen as a long rigmarole of don'ts. Sinlessness is the ideal, not sin conquering. To become "sinless" we must not indulge in this, that and the other, until life is deprived of all the elements that make it most worth living. Such a life is clearly only for the middle aged and old, who have passed the most adventurous age. What is there to inspire youth and courage and the fighting instinct in the current conception of the Christian life?

As we look at the life of Jesus we see at once that it was a very daring attempt. Even if we say, as did many of His contemporaries, that it ended in failure, we none the less marvel at its fearless conception and heroic ending. Here was a man who was prepared to stake everything—comfort, home life, popularity, power, success—upon an ideal,

* For a further treatment of this point see Chapter X.

upon a view of God and man that had never before been put to the test. There could be no thought of compromise. He saw well enough that the world of his day was not ready for such a life, it was clearly being run on principles that would not tolerate Him. Either He or it must be broken. Yet He never yielded an inch. He was utterly convinced that He was right, and even if, as He soon saw must be the case, He had to die in the attempt, He was determined to live by the law of love, to forgive to the uttermost, to turn the other cheek.

A religion that is content with compromise, and that allows the argument of expediency, can never be the religion of Jesus Christ, whatever we may call it. It is precisely when we see the unreality of much of our religious life, the great gulf fixed between profession and practice, that we begin to see both the cause of the insipid taste of much religious talking and writing, and the road by which to remedy the failure. Set forth upon the adventurous, it may seem the quixotic and impossible path, of trying to live by the principles we profess, and you shall find enough adventure for the bravest spirits in the world. There are ever new worlds to conquer. The task is beset with dangers. Not a day need pass in which you shall not be face to face with peril or nakedness or sword. Try to be really Christian in business

and you may discover the Cross to be no longer an antiquated symbol, but a present-day reality. Face the vested interests of your own town, the owners of wretched house-property, the sweaters, the men who live by the shame of women, the publicans, all who grind the face of the poor, and you shall know the fierce joy of being persecuted for Christ's sake. Attempt the stupendous task of making the message of Christ a reality to people of another race and civilisation, try to christianise international relations and inter-racial contacts, and you shall find that there is enough to call forth the entire energies of a full-blooded manhood and womanhood.

This demand for adventure will not be satisfied until the religion we practise, or seriously seek to practise, is something like the religion we profess, until we are applying it to the most difficult questions of modern social life, as well as in our private lives and in our homes. But when we do this we shall rediscover the glory of the Christian faith. It will be something men care to live and die for. It will call out all the finer qualities, instead of turning some of the bravest souls away in weary disgust.

The life of adventure is, further, a life of joy. No doubt there is a certain smug happiness in feeling safe. There is a sense of satisfaction in an insurance policy. But can it be seriously contended that there is any joy in it ?

The niggard policy is barren of any great delights. Mr. Wells says of one of his characters: "Indeed, that was his philosophy of life—to hustle and save, always to hustle and save. His political creed linked Reform, which meant nothing, with Peace and Economy, which meant a sweated expenditure, and his conception of a satisfactory municipal life was to 'keep down the rates.' Even his religion was to save his soul, and to preach a similar cheeseparing to the world."*

Whatever the religious specialist may say, the man and the woman of to-day are not going to be content with a religious message that centres round saving one's own soul, and that finds its inspiration and its starting point in appealing to fear and selfishness. We must appeal to those big, noble instincts that carry men outside themselves, and commit them to a cause, however hopeless or unpopular. This is why the suffrage movement and the socialist movement and others have rallied a fine type of mind that has turned away from the Church.

Let us look again at Jesus Christ. He is called "the Man of Sorrows," and the name reveals a tremendous truth. But He may with equal truth be called the Man of Joy. Think of Him among His little band of followers, disheartened, and soon to lose Him.

* "Kipps," p. 39 in the cheap edition.

Hear Him as He speaks with calm certainty of the victory He is about to win (by way of the gallows), and of the joy—His joy—which they might have. What was that joy? Surely in part, if not mainly, it was the joy of the adventure, of going forward alone and unafraid to put to the final test this eternal truth, the love that could not fail. It was the joy of battle when, one against the world, He was to risk everything, and pay the full price of His supreme conviction, of His undiscourageable love.

That joy He bequeathed as a last legacy to His friends. They knew it. It upheld them when they were cast out, and scourged and stoned. It shone on Stephen's face, and broke through the prison gates of Philippi. It swept men into the splendid fellowship of the little band of men and women who were out to dare all and lose all in order to fulfil that amazing injunction to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

From our blasé, emaciated, modern world men look out upon a social order where dull monotony rules the lives of the vast majority. They turn to a Church whose arid negations seem to take the very spice out of life, and whose specious compromises bid us be content with second-rate goodness. Small wonder if they fail to find in religion the joy of great endeavours, and seek the satisfaction of a

deep soul-longing in hectic pleasures or even on the field of battle. The Church's failure is not that it has asked too much of men. It has thought too meanly of them. It has been frightened by the world's loud boast of power. It has lowered its flag, lest it should be swept away in the gale. Let it be raised again to catch the winds of God in the upper air. Let the Church sound forth a note of unhesitating challenge to evil, to social wrong, to pride of place and wealth, to the patronising philanthropy that masquerades as goodness, to the very structure of a society rooted in class prejudice and national exclusiveness, and it will rally behind it the legion of those who are but waiting to hear the call to battle.

For there is that in human nature that waits for such a call. Many men are bigger, braver, kinder than they themselves know, or than their neighbours dream. They wait until the grand appeal is made. Jesus made it long ago in Galilee. He discovered to men their divine possibilities. He saw in the tax-collector the son of Abraham, and the man who had taken the goods of others by fraud restored them fourfold. He saw in the woman living in sin a potential worshipper of the true God, and she became a missionary to her own people. If only His voice could be heard again to-day! It must be if we are to be saved from ourselves. He shall

find us yet, and draw out from us our hidden powers, and make heroes of the most timid of us, and unite us in the supreme adventure of bringing beauty and truth and peace and joy into a disordered and diseased world.

THE DEMAND FOR FREEDOM

Lost, long ago, that garden bright and pure,
Lost, that calm day too perfect to endure,
And lost the childlike love that worshipped and was sure.
For men have dulled their eyes with sin,
And dimmed the light of heaven with doubt,
And built their temple walls to shut Thee in,
And framed their iron creeds to shut Thee out.
But not for Thee the closing of the door,
O Spirit unconfined!
Thy ways are free
As is the wandering wind,
And Thou hast wooed Thy children, to restore
Their fellowship with Thee,
In peace of soul and simpleness of mind.—HENRY VAN DYKE.

V

THE DEMAND FOR FREEDOM

One of the most powerful and creative spiritual ideals in our own time has been shown to be the ideal of freedom. It has uprooted tyrannies ; it has liberated the slave ; it has created nations ; it has produced revolutions. There is something in every man that responds to the call to liberty. To achieve liberty for ourselves or for others seems a worthy aim for which to sacrifice ease and wealth and life itself. It even seems worth while to curtail our own liberties, if thereby the cause of freedom in the world may be forwarded. Of this we have a notable example at the present time. In what cause but that of freedom itself would we accept the limitations to freedom imposed upon us to-day ?

What, then, is a state of freedom ? Let us define it as one which secures the power of self-determination, whether to the individual or to the group, that is to say, the ability to express the self. Anything which prevents that expression, anything which makes us act or seem other than we are, is felt to be a bondage, whether it be in the form of economic, political or religious restraint. The demand

for freedom is a direct result of self-consciousness. A person or a group that has not arrived at self-consciousness cannot seek self-expression, though there may be a sense of the irksomeness of particular restrictions. The desire for freedom is something more than a revolt against bondage: it is a passion for fullness of life.

It follows, therefore, that this demand will increase as the value of personality increases. The more the individual or the community is worth, the greater the need for self-expression. Any religion that is going to make a broadly human appeal must have a Gospel of Freedom.

Of course, there can be no absolute freedom for anyone. We live in a society which, from the nature of the case, limits independent action. Our spirits are restricted by our bodies and our minds, so that they cannot arrive at once, if ever on this earth, at the fullness for which they crave. Freedom is a relative term, but it none the less represents an absolute good, something which we know instinctively to be worthy of attainment.

What, then, are the things which hinder full self-expression? When presented with the question, the mind naturally turns first of all to the outward conditions that impose restrictions upon us. We think of the prisoner or the slave bound by chains, locked in gaol, or bought and sold like a piece of property.

The mind passes at once in these days to the bondage of political dependence, to the peoples who have not free institutions, who groan under the tyranny of autocrat or bureaucracy, or who are subject to another nation. From this we pass to economic slavery (wage-slavery, as it is called, though this term only partly covers industrial serfdom). We think of the men and women who are at the mercy of an employer, and dependent upon the state of the "labour market" for the means of subsistence just as much as the slave depended on the slave market; and in fact, even more so, for the slave-owner, in his own interest, would at least maintain the slave until he could secure a purchaser, whereas the labourer of to-day is left to starve if there is no demand for him in the labour market.

From these forms of bondage our mind passes to a more general consideration of the outward restrictions by which men are imprisoned. There are the circumstances that surround our lives, which are not of our own choosing, and which seem to hinder full self-expression. There are the cramping results of much of our education directed, as it often is, to mere accumulation of knowledge, or to securing business efficiency, rather than towards the expansion and liberation of the mind and the spirit. There are the conventions of the society in which we live.

There are the materials with which we have to work. All of these things seem at various times to be as fetters against which we chafe. The free, eager spirit of man longs to break through them all.

But it does not require much thought to discover that freedom is not really a matter of outward conditions. It has been the privilege of the present writer to visit hundreds of men who, for conscience sake, have been put into prison. They have been confined in isolated cells ; their whole life is ordered by a strict *régime* ; their intercourse with their fellows is reduced to a few perfunctory dealings with warders, and a very rare visit from the outside world. Yet no one who has met these men, who has looked in their faces, or who has joined in worship with them, would dream of regarding them as captives. Their spirits are free. They have the secret of liberty.

Outward conditions have a relation to the problem of freedom, but freedom is something far bigger than economic or political liberty. The chains that really fetter men are largely of their own making. They may have been made by us unconsciously ; we may have been almost driven to forge these chains ; we seldom realise to what extent we shall be bound by them when they are made. But they are, in large part, our own handiwork.

Our own past holds us in an iron grip. It is few people who have the moral courage to escape from their own past acts. The companionships we have formed, the habits we have fallen into, the things we have said, bind us far more tightly than handcuffs and stocks. We are bound by our stupid idea of consistency, that holds us back from any open break with our past, however much our minds may have moved in the meantime. We are bound by ignorance and by fear—the fear of ridicule, the fear of failure, the fear of exposure, the fear of consequences of many kinds. How many there are who are conscious of a better self seeking expression yet unable to do so because of some inward restraint! Where does religion come in in relation to this elemental craving for freedom, for the larger life, for the complete and satisfying self-expression?

To very many religion has the appearance, in the main, of a fresh and very galling restriction. In addition to the authority of the state and of the employer, there is the authority of the priest. One more series of laws must be observed, and, if we are to become religious, we put ourselves under a restraint even more irksome than those which it seems as if we were in any case bound to accept. This is surely one reason why so many young people turn away from the Church at the age when self-consciousness is

dawning, and when they begin to crave for the larger life, and to recognise that they have a self needing a full and joyous expression.

It is even worse, perhaps, when religion appears as a fresh inward bondage. The great danger of such a bondage is that it leads to unreality and insincerity. Because of my own past, or because I fear certain consequences, I cannot be myself, I have certain impulses that I must stifle. I have to live up to my own reputation, or up to that which I wish others to think me to be. Even if religion comes in here as, in the main, pointing me to something higher and better, it is still a danger in so far as it prompts me to an unreal standard. Insincerity is a bigger evil than open wickedness.

This it is which lies behind the word of Jesus, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Truth is the real liberator. It means that we are not being compelled to appear other than we are. Above all, we are not deceiving ourselves. We are much less able to deceive others than we think. We are much more able to deceive ourselves than we dream. The self-deceived man is bound hand and foot. He does not know where he is. The one thing that can liberate him is the truth, the terrible, accusing truth, from which he ever turns with growing fear and shame.

When religion is seen only as a new and

dreaded form of bondage, it is small wonder that men turn from it. This misconception of Christianity made Nietzsche denounce it as a slave-religion. Much Sunday School teaching encourages the same idea. The Church seems to stand for a settled order that to very many is identified with political, and still more with economic, dependence.* "Keep in the station in which God has put you" means to many "accept degrading conditions of life." All the better nature of the young man (or woman) revolts against such a doctrine, and he turns from religion disgusted. It can be no friend of his in the grand battle for freedom into which he longs to pour his whole awakened manhood. The teaching he has received in Church or Sunday School does little to encourage the hope that Christ will be with him in that glorious struggle. On the contrary, he thinks of Christ as bidding him patiently accept his lot, as the God of things as they are.†

* See "The Town Labourer." Hammond. Chap. XI.

† One of the great tragedies of to-day is that the Nationalist movement in India is drawing away from Christianity. It is, perhaps, not to be wondered at when Christianity is the religion of the ruling race. It is, nevertheless, an indication also that Christ has not been seen by India as the great Liberator, the One who can lead them most surely into the way of Freedom. In China, on the other hand, many of the finer spirits in the revolutionary movement have been and are Christians, and not a few who do not call themselves Christians recognise that Christ is the one in whom China has most hope of realising her deepest aspirations towards progress and democracy.

All this must be changed if religion is to be re-established in the life of the common man, and in the life of the nation. When Jesus stood in the synagogue of Nazareth, He applied to Himself the words of the prophet : "He hath sent me to announce release to the captive." Wherever He went He set men free, free from the tradition of the elders, from the stupid conventions of His time, from the fear of consequences, from their own past, from the grip of their own lower passions. It may be urged that He would not put Himself at the head of the nationalist movement, which was binding together many patriotic Israelites in an effort for political independence. It may further be urged that He made no protest against slavery, and no direct effort to alter conditions that involved a virtual slavery. Yet He saw that the first thing was to set men's minds free ; and this He did to such an extent that His followers broke through the most cherished prejudices of Judaism, faced the authorities of Church and State without fear, and launched a movement that was to free the world of slavery, as well as of many other forms of bondage. He introduced a spirit which has been far more productive of true freedom than an isolated movement for the political freedom of a particular race could have been. For He opened men's eyes to the meaning of the Kingdom of God which transcends all

national and racial boundaries, as well as those of class and sex.

It is, unfortunately, true that the representatives of Christianity in the world have often been the reverse of liberators. They, like the religious specialists whom Jesus exposed, have bound heavy yokes upon the backs of men. But, in so far as they have done this, they have not been true to their Master. When we get back into the presence of Jesus Himself, we find with what confidence He called men into a free life. Salvation, in the Christian sense, is not, as we have seen, security. It is liberation. It sets free the highest energies of the human spirit, in order that they may be thrown without reserve or restraint into the greatest enterprise to which a man can commit himself. When the spirit of man is thus liberated, he will soon master the outward conditions that cramp and hinder.* As life, in the end, gains the victory over death, so the spirit gains ascendency over the material when once it is truly set free. So, as all great thinkers realise, the starting-point for any movement for political or economic emancipation is always to be found within the minds and spirits of men and women.

* This must not of course be taken as indifference to outward conditions, especially those that oppress the weak and the children. It is our urgent duty as Christians to change these conditions. This needs a great co-operative effort. But mere railing against conditions, or even the changing of them *alone*, will not make men truly free.

Jesus sets men free from just those inward restraints that they are least able to shake off themselves. He liberates them from their own past by creating within them a conviction that God is greater than their past, that He is on the side of their best selves, that He is not concerned with raking up their mistakes and failures, but with helping them into a new and nobler life. When Peter saw his own miserable past standing in his way, he felt that the path of following Jesus was utterly blocked, and he cried out: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man." The answer was a simple, unhesitating call to a future with new ideals and possibilities. When, two or three years later, he was still more deeply involved, and had sinned against the light by denying his Master even when forewarned, the word of Jesus to him was again the call to a new and even more responsible enterprise. When the woman whose sin was discovered cowered before her self-righteous accusers, Jesus gave her the word to "go and sin no more." He was not concerned to condemn. He set forth a God who kept on believing in men, and whose method of dealing with their discreditable past was not to inflict a fitting punishment, or to hold it over their heads as a rod with which to chastise them, but rather to forgive so freely that the liberated spirit could leap forward into the new life with a bound of joy.

Jesus frees men from the fear of one another. the fear of failure, or the fear of consequences, by creating in their hearts a simple and controlling conviction in a Father who is utterly loving. If the last word in the universe, as well as the first, is love, how can men live in fear? Jesus Himself was always facing odds. He had everything against Him, religious leaders implacable and unscrupulous, the most powerful State in the world's history, a mob that was roused to a passion of fear and dislike. In the midst of it all He was perfectly calm. He knew He was on the winning side. He seemed at the mercy of a disorderly crowd, and equally of the representatives of law and order. Yet He was free because He was fearless. He put to the final test His view of the universe, and history bids us look back on Him not as the discredited, defeated and dishonoured failure, but as the Victor triumphant in death itself. Has ever any act done more to liberate the spirits of men than His supreme act of faith in the Father's love? Countless men and women since have laughed at circumstances, have scorned to think of consequences, have followed the truth as they saw it with eyes unafraid and with spirits unchained, because they have caught the spirit of freedom at the Cross of Christ.

Jesus sets men free even from the power of habit and the chains of their own lower natures,

by opening up to them their possibilities in God. That man is most a slave who has no hope for himself. He drags out his life in the minor key. He accepts his own lower nature as his master. We are all conscious of this dualism in ourselves. Whether we go to the seventh chapter of Romans, or to the story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde for our illustration, we know that, in our personality, there are higher and lower elements constantly at war with one another. It is a great day for a man when he discovers that the conflict need not be a losing one. On one the truth flashes in a blinding moment which he may speak of as a new birth. The whole world seems charged with a new meaning, or, as George Fox put it, "all creation gave another smell to me." Something has possessed him that liberates his very soul. From that day on he walks blithely and confidently. With another the truth grows upon his consciousness like the unfolding of the rosebud. Slowly, but not less surely, he finds that power within which is God-given, and the chains of evil habit are broken one by one. However it may come, this great liberation is of the very essence of religion. It sets men in a new relation to life and its problems. No one has done more thus to deliver men's spirits than Jesus of Nazareth. When Paul broke into that amazing expression: "We are more than conquerors through Him tha

loved us," he was seeking some words to express an actual experience that defied expression. However His representatives in the world may misrepresent Him, it is because Christ still brings this great release, this surpassing victory to men, that He holds His sway in their hearts. If He is seen to-day as the Liberator, the Leader into Freedom, He cannot fail to rally around Him the men and women who are pressing out for a larger, freer life, for a truer expression of deep yearnings and hopes that are denied by their outward circumstances or by their inward bondage.

True freedom, the freedom our best natures yearn for, is not mere licence. Paul says, "All things are permissible, but all things are not expedient." We find our larger life not alone but in company with others. In the next chapter we shall look at some of the limitations of freedom which the free spirit will itself accept. What remains to be said here is that there is a deep paradox involved in the only kind of freedom that will work in this world of ours. It is expressed in the words of the Prayer Book "whose service is perfect freedom." Paul, who asserts that "with freedom did Christ set us free," still glories in the fact that he is a bondman of the same Christ. Am I then not free to do as I like? Yes, I am so free, but what I like to do is to serve. I accept not the restraints put upon me by an external authority and

discipline, but those which I freely choose in order that I may truly serve my fellows.

In the eyes of many, freedom confers the right to dominate. The free man or the free people can order about the slave or the subject race. Not so the truly free. They are those who, having become free, are devoted to the freeing of others, even if, in so doing, they must, for a time, accept limitations again. Our bondage thus becomes not a restraint which prevents us from expressing ourselves, it becomes rather the means of our self-expression. As the mother gladly and even eagerly accepts the limitations, the restraints, involved in child-bearing, in their nurture and in their education, so the spirit of man, liberated by Christ the Son of Man, joyfully accepts the limitations of a life that will help to build up a new social order. His life is directed to the common good, not because he is compelled by the law of the land or of the Church to do or not to do certain things, but because he has come under an inward compulsion which unites him in a common life with all mankind. Thus, by the limitations he accepts can be judged not the religious sect to which a man is supposed to belong, but the religion by which he lives. His liberty of his inner life is expressed often by way of what seems like an actual curtailment of the self. This is an altogether different thing from the observance of the

outward rules of religion in order to conform.* The one belongs to a religion of reality and freedom, the other to a religion of unreality and bondage.

* Of course, the outward forms of any particular religious sect or ritual may be observed by the free spirit because they happen to be the form of self-limitation to which he feels called by the spirit of love within. When so observed, they are not open to the same objection, if to any. What is here criticised is conformity for conformity's sake.

THE DEMAND FOR FELLOWSHIP

A duty, an absolute duty, governs him from the cradle upwards; growing with his growth and accompanying him to the tomb; a duty towards his brothers, as well as to himself; a duty towards his Country, towards Humanity, and above all, towards the Church; the Church, which, rightly understood, is but the home of the universal family; the great city wherein dwells Christ, at once Priest, King, and ruler of the world; calling upon the free, in every portion of the universe, to unite beneath the eternal law of intellect and love.—LAMENNAIS.

VI

THE DEMAND FOR FELLOWSHIP

SINCE man is a social animal, and can never come to his fullness in isolation, any true religion must provide for fellowship. No doubt there are experiences that must be intensely individual. Some of our highest heights and our deepest depths cannot be shared even with our nearest and dearest. Allowing for this to the full, however, we still have the craving for genuine companionship. Much has been said and written about the fellowship of the trenches. Its real significance is not the superficial hail-fellow-well-met attitude that characterises so largely the men in army or navy, and that seems to break down social barriers. It is essentially the sharing of intimate and soul-stirring experiences, a sense of unity in the things that for most men can never rise to the surface in chaff and chatter. Many have found a new sense of fellowship in the experience of war. Their ordinary life has not provided this: in fact it has scarcely made them aware of the need. Suddenly they have been plunged into a new and wonderful life. It has meant more poignant experiences than anything that has

hitherto seemed possible. And in those experiences they have found themselves one with their neighbours.

Such fellowship may come in the very depth of the revolt against war, its horror, its suffering, its iron grip on body or soul. Or it may come in the sharing of a great adventure, the risk, the desperate advance, or the slow and painful retreat. Or it may come in the glory of giving one's life for one's country, the supreme sacrifice made without ostentation and without complaint. Or it may come in the long, dull months, when "nothing of importance" is happening, and when men are thrown together so that they see into one another's souls, and share the monotony and the strain, the discomforts and the alleviations. However it comes, this fellowship meets a deep human need.

Generally speaking, men do not look to religion for the satisfying of this need. It has become an unwritten law in many circles in this country not to share our religious opinions or feelings. A constraint falls on us when we talk "religion," an awkward silence, or a special and unnatural trick of speech. We mask our real feelings. We pride ourselves on our reserve. It seems bad form to introduce a religious subject into ordinary conversation. It is generally agreed that religion must be ruled out from business or political discussions.

That there may be something admirable in this habit of reserve we need not deny. We do not want to share our deepest thoughts with anyone who happens to come along. It is, in part, due to a sense of the sacredness of our religious convictions. It is, nevertheless, unnatural and harmful. It is part of the unreality already referred to. If religion is a thing put on for certain occasions and in certain company, it is, of course, difficult to speak of it naturally on other occasions or in other company. If, however, religion is part of ourselves, there need be no constraint in regard to it, any more than there is in our natural spontaneous acts and words.

How few people have found in Church associations the deepest and truest fellowship! The religious set is the last one, often, to which young people turn to satisfy this craving. Once get into it, come to a religious meeting, or start a religious conversation, and the spirit of fellowship dies. Even within congregations, is it not often true that the fellowship that does exist is on the social level, but that it is not the sharing of the religious life in any sense at all? The Church is simply a club where the social instincts can be satisfied as in any other club, not the centre of a deep fellowship such as that which has been discovered in the trenches, or, it may be, in the women's movement, or the socialist society.

Moreover, even when the Church life has provided a fellowship in religion, it has very often been an exclusive fellowship—not the grand cameraderie that attracts others into it, but the narrow cliquishness that develops a particular form of address, and that is actually repellent to most healthy-minded persons. Such a fellowship seems to centre around a particular creed, a particular interpretation of prophecy, a particular form of worship, or a particular set of hymns. It has nothing big, universal and enheartening about it. One feels instinctively that to be drawn into such a fellowship will be cramping to mind and soul alike.

So far, indeed, from fellowship of any kind being the characteristic of our organised religion, it is, in many cases, precisely the opposite. The pew rent emphasises social distinctions. The entry into Church "fellowship" is very frequently a means of marking a stage in social advance, and a desire, perhaps, to dissociate oneself from others. To many the Church is nothing more than the place where they meet when least themselves, and with the smallest possible chance of developing friendly personal relations.

If the Church were truly partner in a common struggle, a common poverty,* a common shame with the mass of the people

* It is not, of course, to be supposed that poverty is here thought of as desirable for its own sake. So far as it is desirable (for the rich) it is as a means to an end—true fellowship.

who struggle, and are poor and distressed, there would be a new meaning in religion for countless men and women to-day. Fellowship would once more become one of the leading characteristics of a religious group, instead of aloofness and condescension. Men would find in the religious life the satisfaction they need to this demand for fellowship.

The lack of adventure is also, in part, accountable for the lack of fellowship in our religious life. Nothing does more to bind men together in intimate ties than a shared enterprise, more particularly if the enterprise be attended with risks and dangers. If the Church were really facing in any courageous and whole-hearted way the social and international evils of to-day, if it were at grips with privilege and position and vested interest, if it were bravely putting to the test the Christian way of life, and accepting all the risks of a life lived simply on the principle of love, is it not perfectly obvious that a sense of fellowship in this great effort would be developed, and that men and women would find one another at a deeper plane than is commonly the case in our formal religious life to-day, in arranging bazaars and whist drives to clear away debts or buy organs, or even in the mutual improvement societies into which Church fellowships so often degenerate ?

Moreover, the fellowship of religious groups

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to-day is manifestly national. It scarcely required the world-war to show it, but it certainly now stands revealed in all its naked denial of the spirit of Christ. Here are the most trusted leaders of almost every Church using all their efforts to bolster up the national cause, and content, in many cases, to see the growth of national hatred, and even to contemplate its perpetuation after the war. Only here and there is there any recognition of a brotherhood in Christ that transcends national frontiers. Praying for enemies is often conveniently forgotten. The most terrible sentiments may be heard in pulpits in every land—sentiments which must make the angels weep.* The representatives of Christ have left it to the socialists to make the beginning in seeking to re-establish an international fellowship.

* That this is no exaggeration the following extracts, taken at random, will clearly show :—

"Germans ? I say to hell with the Germans. . . . If you ever come across a man with a bomb, 'Come outside, brother, and let us pray' . . . Truss him up, take him out on the meadows, place his damned bomb on his chest, and then stand off a few feet, and watch him get blown to hell, where he belongs with the Kaiser. . . . Treat a German propagandist the same way. Hammer his face off. You have ropes here and steel girders. Use them !"—Rev. Dr. E. of the M.A. Church.

"I am willing to forgive the Germans for their atrocities just as soon as they are all shot. If you would give me happiness, just give me the sight of the Kaiser, von Tirpitz and Von Hindenburg hanging by a rope. If we forgive Germany after the war, I think the universe will have gone wrong."—Rev. Dr. H. of P. Church, B.

Actual names are not given, as there is no desire to pillory individuals. The second quotation was given with approval by one of the most widely read religious weeklies.

They have surrendered their position with scarcely a sigh, when the one body which should surely have kept the international flag flying was that which was supposed in all nations to represent One whom we speak of as the Saviour of the world.*

Jesus created a fellowship of a very different order. People were attracted to it. There was a spontaneous joy about it that could not fail to impress the world. "See," said their early critics, "how these Christians love one another." They even, for a time, had all things in common.† They seem to have gone freely in and out of one another's homes. They were engaged in a common adventure, taking tremendous risks, and driven together by the opposition of a hostile world. Yet the fellowship increased constantly. Its joy was infectious. It knew no boundaries, racial or social.

Now, fellowship is much more than a passing mood. In the last chapter we were considering freedom, and we saw that, under the circumstances of our life here, freedom could never be absolute. Certain limitations

* The movement for an International Christian Conference during war-time did, indeed, make some progress during the fourth year of war; but it met with much official opposition, and very little official support.

† The question as to whether this particular experiment was the best way of expressing the common life is too complex for discussion here. Suffice it to say that its apparent failure does not prove that it was a mistake, and that even this may have been due to adventitious circumstances rather than to any inherent fault.

must be accepted, and these will, in the case of a free man, depend upon his own spirit and his view of life. The man who seeks wealth imposes upon himself restrictions in the squandering of his money and the use of his time. The man who seeks political power sets a limit to his desires for pleasure. The athlete knows he cannot indulge freely in food or drink. Everything, then, depends upon the determining purpose that decides the nature of the restrictions I accept or impose upon myself.

According to Jesus Christ, our freedom must be limited by our consideration of the welfare of others. Life is made for fellowship and service. The supreme word of the religion of Jesus is Love. Love breaks down the dividing walls. It overcomes prejudices: it creates sympathy and understanding: it forgives wrong not once nor twice, but till "seventy times seven." That is to say, it is so bent on fellowship, on mutual adjustment, on a life lived in harmony with one's fellows, that even the "natural" impulse of resentment, or desire for retaliation, is put on one side. We press into the larger life, in which we share one another's burdens, and become partners of one another's joys and sorrows.

Indeed, we cannot understand Jesus Himself unless we see how He came to men, not as One who, in helping them, would patronise

and pauperise them, but as One who identified Himself with all men. His help to us is given through the channel of fellowship. He shared the life of the commonest, the poorest, the least attractive, the vilest, and this was for Him the natural expression of love. What an utterly different thing from the help given condescendingly by the superior man, the alms given so "graciously" by my lady bountiful! Christ's way of giving calls forth no resentment, and creates no cringing. It makes those who are thus helped feel men and women, because it enables them to rise to the heights of their own personalities.

Further, Jesus Christ called His followers into a piece of work so utterly beyond their powers, so much too big for isolated efforts, so hazardous and so glorious, that they were welded, in the white heat of a great endeavour, into a deep unity. When this happens again, there will be little, if any, need to have ecclesiastics and theologians devoting their best efforts to problems of Church unity. It will have come not by tinkering compromises, by formulæ that hide differences, or by mechanical repetition of creeds and observance of rites, but by the sheer necessity of the case. The world to-day waits for a great adventure towards goodness, purity in public life, courageous handling of great social evils. Those who are truly possessed

by the spirit of Jesus must find themselves bound into one body, whatever their name or sign, as they really face these problems.

Undoubtedly, Jesus meant to establish a universal fellowship. Though, in His own life-time, He limited His activities very largely to His own nation, His eye was ever on the world, the "other sheep," who were to come into the one flock. His immediate followers so far got hold of this thought as to be able to break away, intensely difficult as it was for them, from the traditions of one of the most narrowly national tribes known to history. The international idea is an integral part of Christianity. When it is lost sight of, or put in the background, religion loses its appeal to something far deeper than what ordinarily goes by the name of patriotism. During the war, the Church has failed to say the distinctively Christian thing on this subject. If its voice is to have any moral weight, it must stand for and show an international fellowship that can stand the strain of a world-war, and rise triumphant in the very circumstances that most seriously threaten that fellowship.

It may be urged that men commonly do not desire so inclusive a fellowship, that most are content with one that goes no further than a small circle, home, intimate friends, and at most a certain sense of unity with the rest of the nation. Even if this be admitted,

however, it is still true that men are capable of understanding and appreciating the idea of the wider fellowship. Given the hope of fellowship at all, can we really be satisfied with any state of society which excludes certain classes or races from that fellowship? If the ideal human relationship is one of fellowship, anything which denies that to any section is not simply rendering the ideal incomplete: it is actually opposed to it.

At a recent socialist gathering, the writer was present and heard a huge hall full of people cheering to the echo, and that in war time, the ideal of a "new co-operative world commonwealth." It was explicitly stated that this must include those who were then our enemies.* Probably comparatively few in that great building were swayed consciously by Christian ideals. But the hope that stirred their hearts was a Christian hope. They were men and women who were not going to be content with any partial or exclusive fellowship. They had seen something bigger and better. They were of those who "needs must love the highest if they see it," and, having seen it, they could not go back on it.

Universal testimony assures us that the fellowship of the trenches is not inspired by hatred towards the German soldier. He is

* *Cf.* George Fox, *Epistles*, p. 12, "Mind that which is pure in one another which joins you together."

more to be pitied than blamed. He is doing his duty as our men do theirs. So a true spiritual fellowship breaks the narrow bounds of passion and exclusiveness with which men in their blindness seek to imprison it. Religion should bring in and develop to the highest this true passion. If it fails to do so, men will continue to look to the public house, the gambling den, or the merely political or social club, for the fulfilment of an essential demand of their nature. It cannot be denied, even by the failure of religious leaders, though it may easily be denied its highest expression.

Any religion that calls men to freedom, and that promises the liberation of men's spirits, must have also a fellowship to offer, and, indeed, a gospel of fellowship. For freedom may be the greatest of dangers unless the free spirit is brought into relation to other free spirits, and unless the passion for fellowship and service is developed along with the liberation of mind and soul. Simply to talk about and work for freedom may be to let loose men's lowest passions, and to plunge the world into disorder and strife. Freedom in trade may simply mean that the small man or the weak nation is pushed to the wall, that the rich combine flourishes and dominates the world. Private-mindedness can ride in triumphantly upon the tide of such a freedom, and destroy all that makes life beautiful and holy.

If, however, freedom and fellowship are twin demands, both of which must be met, and which are being met side by side, then the free spirit inspired by love becomes the organ of a social development and improvement that is poles apart from the one-sided individualism that may flourish in a "free" state. The religion men need to-day, not for trotting out on Sundays and state occasions, but for the closely fitting work-a-day clothes, must be a religion where freedom is achieved in fellowship with others, a living, burning fellowship of spirit reaching out to all men everywhere. And it must be a religion in which fellowship is discovered by free men and women who are bound together not by the artificial laws and conventions of an archaic society, but by the joy of a great adventure, by the splendour of a worthy ideal, and by the supreme attraction of a Leader who will command their utmost love and loyalty because of His inherent qualities of heart and mind. This is what Christianity essentially is ; and, when it is so seen by plain men and women, when it is applied in the social and national life without flinching, it will rally, as it is not now doing, all the finest and most adventurous spirits of this and other lands.

THE DEMAND FOR A PURPOSE

So, too, the great principle of the religious solidarity of mankind in Christ, implied in the idea of the Kingdom of God, inevitably carries with it the principle of a new social order in which the idea of private interest will be not negated, but taken up into the larger idea of the Common Good, and rights at last be harmonised with duties.

Let men beware of how they admit a great religious idea into the hidden recesses of the heart! It is the seed from which innumerable undreamed-of harvests may spring. What amazing social changes, what wars, revolutions, empires, commonwealths, lay in that single idea of the priesthood of all believers, of justification by faith alone! Luther taught that it was "the article of a standing or a falling Church." Modern history has taught that it is the article of a standing or a falling society. The demonstration of that truth has cost the human race not a little toil and not a little blood. The price was worth paying, but it has been heavy.

Even so let men beware of the Idea of the Kingdom. At present it is in the hands and hearts mainly of teachers of religion, but its day may come in the great open field. Revolutions may be in it which will make the earth shake and ring, wars which will convulse world society, great commonwealths on a vaster and nobler scale than the world has ever known, at the last, perhaps, a new world order of social and industrial peace.—Professor D. S. Cairns.

VII

THE DEMAND FOR A PURPOSE

One of the greatest tragedies of human life is to see a person highly gifted, well-educated, with doors of usefulness open before him, squandering his life on some unworthy end. Perhaps it is no less tragic, though less dramatic, to see tens of thousands of men and women, for whom life seems to hold out no great possibility, who are content with days and years of monotonous and uninspired toil, who have no object in life beyond pleasure, or wealth, or the actual struggle for existence. It is probably true that, for many who have fallen in this war, or who are still engaged in waging it, no really big compelling purpose had taken hold of them until August, 1914. Then, for the first time, their life was gripped by a purpose that seemed worthy of it. They were not, in many cases, conscious previously of any particular lack. But, when the purpose possessed them, they knew the difference: they found themselves living on a higher plane, life had a deeper meaning than ever before, even the drudgery was glorified.

The life of any man or woman needs an aim outside itself if it is truly to fulfil itself.

The poet Whittier, speaking from his own experience, advised young men early in life to join some difficult and unpopular cause. Many of the greatest and many of the humblest have proved the value of such a course in shaping character. What are freedom and fellowship for? Are they ends in themselves, or do they contribute to something else which, having once been seen by a man, will transform and illuminate all his life?

No aim in life can be regarded as sufficient that is centred in the individual. Nevertheless, very many who have a clear aim have never, apparently, got further than this. Personal ambition, wealth, power, happiness, ease, are motives that seem to dominate the lives of very many, whether we call them religious people or not. "Religion" may, in fact, very often come in as subsidiary to the central aim, a useful adjunct in order to help a man to climb the social ladder, or to put a cloak of respectability over doubtful practices.

Any idea that this can be a function of true religion is utterly alien to the thought of this book. The religion men need is not something that can be accessory to a personal aim in life, it must be something which provides the central aim, and nothing less. In fact, it may, with truth, be said of many of those just described that self *is* their religion, or wealth, or power, or ease.

Religion must take control of life—in fact it does take control of life—and anyone who is called religious, but is not controlled by religion, is miscalled. This is the fatal error in the use of the word cropping up again.

We have a claim to be called religious not by developing a certain side of our nature which is appealed to by religious talk, or tickled by religious music, but by coming wholly under the sway of a spiritual purpose. This will affect not merely certain activities of a more or less extraneous character, such as Church-attendance, or the things we do on Sunday, but all life, business, recreation, home-life, our reading, our companionships, our casual conversation. It is often said that it matters little what a man believes, so long as he lives a decent, kindly life.* If a man's belief or religion be merely a cloak to be put on or taken off at will, this is a very true saying: if it be the central and controlling purpose guiding all his actions, there is no meaning whatever in the saying. The life he lives unerringly reveals his ultimate belief.

It is, unfortunately, true that many people attach themselves to a religion without finding any purpose in life at all. The Church, does indeed provide what is spoken of as a "vocation" for a certain small number of persons, mostly of the male sex, whose purpose it is supposed to be to advance the

* For further treatment of this point see Chapter XI., pp. 199ff.

cause of the Church to which they belong. Undoubtedly there are many of these to whom this "vocation" becomes a real life-purpose, and who see that purpose as something far nobler and more inclusive than the pushing of a particular sect, and who give themselves without stint to its accomplishment. To others, however, the vocation is much like any other, teaching, doctoring, or what not. It is a means to an end, the way by which they earn their living; and, to the outsider, it frequently seems to be very easily earned at that. Even supposing that all ministers, evangelists and missionaries, were truly and completely possessed by a life-purpose of the very highest description, this would not satisfy what the layman needs from religion. No doubt it is a very inspiring thing to see a man or woman so possessed. His example may thrill and uplift me. But, unless the Church can give me a like inspiration, the effect may ultimately be actually depressing.

And this need is not to be met by saying to men: "Well, if you want to know this great purpose, come and enter the ministry, or go out as a missionary." The world needs men and women in numberless different walks of life—the blacksmith, the farm-labourer, the fisherman, the carpenter, the business man, the lawyer, the engineer, the clerk, the domestic servant. What has the Church

to say to each of these ? Can it supply a sense of a great objective, something utterly worth while, worth living and dying for ? It can scarcely be contended that this demand has been at all adequately faced and met by any body of Christians. How many average Church members have a glowing purpose in life that transfuses and transfigures it ? How many outside the Church look to her as a source of such inspiration ? We are much more likely to look to the State, and, in the midst of this great war, it seems as if States were really showing the Church the way, in meeting this simple human demand. Scarcely any activity of normal life is not now related in some way to the war, and to the maintenance of the nation in its full life and power for the purpose towards which every energy is bent. Everywhere, and not simply in the army and navy, you will find men and women who see their work as a national asset, something that counts in achieving a purpose, and that purpose one that is almost independent of their own personal satisfaction.

In reading the story of Jesus, and of the Church of the first century, we seem to catch a glimpse of just such a purpose. It is, indeed, much more than a glimpse in the teaching of Jesus Himself. No word is more on His lips than the phrase " the Kingdom of God." What did it mean ? Not simply the

individual entrance into a spiritual heritage hereafter, but the cause of love and truth and joy in the world. Much has been done recently to recapture this idea of the Kingdom of God. To the scholar and the preacher it has come to have a new significance. To the rank and file it has, as yet, but little meaning. To Jesus Christ it meant everything. To His disciples it was a supreme passion, a ruling purpose. Whatever their life, wherever it was lived, it had a definite relation to this central idea. "Seek first," said Jesus, "the Kingdom of God," which does not mean simply "seek first to enter into it for yourself," but, rather, "set its interests first in your life, make it the purpose to which all else shall yield, and, doing this, the whole of life shall be enriched." In fact to enter this Kingdom means to be possessed by it.

What, then, does this phrase stand for? It sets forth nothing less than an ideal for human society in which men and women shall live together in harmony and mutual service, striving for worthy ends, increasing in their knowledge of nature and of God. At the very heart of this splendid ideal is the utter conviction that possessed Jesus as to the nature of God and His nearness and readiness to help. We shall consider more fully in later chapters the working out of this thought.*

* See Chapters X. and XI.

Here we must insist chiefly on two points. The purpose concerns the whole life of each person in all the world, and it is one which can only be realised in unity with God.

In regard to the first of these points, it should be noted that any such purpose cannot be fulfilled merely by a certain caste set apart for preaching. If it be a genuine human society, it needs all kinds of people in all kinds of occupations. It may quite well be true that there is no room in such an ideal for certain occupations now practised. Obviously there is no room for those who gain their livelihood by pandering to vicious tastes, or for those who live upon the failure or mistakes of others. That is to say, certain occupations must drop out of the picture. Can we imagine an ideal state of society in which there are book-makers, procurers, pawnbrokers, and, indeed, many others who are a recognised part of the modern social organism ? No more can we find a place for those whose occupation is created by the demand for luxury and for decadent pleasures. But there are many others who, as society is now organised, are living uninspired lives, but whose occupations are such that there must be room in the Kingdom of God as realised on earth for something corresponding to that occupation. For all such the Kingdom of God, as a controlling life-purpose, hould mean the relation of their lives to the hope

of a better world, so that, in that occupation, they may always be consciously working for conditions that come nearer to the ideal, for a spirit of service instead of profit-making, for co-operation instead of competition.

In respect of the second point that is here emphasised, we must never forget that Jesus Christ did not think of the Kingdom of God as realisable without the help of God. Society, as we know it, virtually leaves God out of account. We do not seriously reckon with Him in our politics, our local government, the management of business or of public affairs. We may say that society is organised on the basis of blindness in regard to God. The underlying assumption is that we have to get on as best we can without Him, that He is at best looking on in a mildly interested way, and prepared, if we are in desperate straits, to answer our impassioned call, at worst that He is a convenient myth for weak-minded persons to take refuge in. It is true that prayers are read in the House of Commons, but how many regard that as more than a form ? And when have we really determined any great national issue simply on the basis of Christ's teaching, or turned to God for guidance in regard to it ? While it is not possible to dwell on what that might mean, a few moments' thought may help us to appreciate something of the distance of the ideal that Jesus set before men, and the

difficulty of attaining it. Whether we call it by His name or by some other, we may be so possessed by it, we may so work for it, not as a far-distant dream, but as a realisable possibility, that our whole life shall be lifted on to a higher plane, and every activity be charged with a deeper meaning.

We need an ideal that is both material and spiritual. Such an ideal is that of Jesus. On the material side He saw men healthier in body, living in better conditions, each contributing something to the common life. On the spiritual side He saw men developing those qualities of mind and heart that are in harmony with the nature and will of God as He conceived it. This ideal, however remote it might seem to ordinary view, was not for Him outside the range of possibility, because the underlying conviction on which His whole life, and His philosophy of life, were based, was the conviction that God, His Father, was willing and able to help men in bringing the Kingdom to pass. The higher the ideal we have for human society, the more impracticable it is likely to seem. This is the case if the only factor in the situation be the human one. The more perfect, the farther it must be from our imperfect human grasp. If, however, the Divine factor is a real one, and if, the higher we aim, the more largely we may avail ourselves of the Divine help, if our experience of God's power is conditioned, in

part, by the greatness of the demand we make upon Him, is it not possible that the higher the ideal the more practicable it becomes ?

A recent writer has said : " Your modern Utopians are not Utopian enough," suggesting that it may, from a practical standpoint, be better at times to state the full demand than to water it down to what we suppose, in our blindness, that the world is ready for. On the plane of strategy, it may be true wisdom to go for the whole rather than a part, for, by so doing, you call out a passionate enthusiasm, instead of a quiet and less dynamic support. Those who have followed Jesus have been afraid of His idealism.* Instead of preaching the Kingdom of God, they have set up half-way houses that had little to attract, and that were much more easily assailed by argument and even by ridicule. Their boasted wisdom has often been shown to be folly. The world has not been shown anything good enough to win it from its selfishness and ease, anything so grand and so difficult of attainment that it is worth having, worth living for, and worth dying for.

It is time to set before men again, in all its folly if you will, the supreme purpose that shone before the eyes of Jesus. Let us see if it will not attract and inspire our own generation. To many it must seem a vain dream.

* For a fuller development of this point see Chapter XII., pp. 209ff

But to those who dare to dream it, and to stake everything on the possibility of its fulfilment, a new purpose will have swept through their life. It will purify, it will uplift, it will co-ordinate all the activities, it will glorify the simplest duty and the commonest calling. Every man and every woman will have a true vocation, not something that separates him from his fellows, or from the common life of common men, but something that binds him to them in a fellowship of joy and suffering.

It is the peculiar duty of the Christian Church to give this purpose to the world, but she can only do it as she is herself possessed by it. A Church that lives for herself, whose main business seems to be to keep going, to inspire her own members, to train her own children, and to bury her own dead, can never create in the hearts of men that boundless enthusiasm for the Kingdom of God that will itself be redemptive and creative. The Church, not less than the individual, must be prepared to lose her life in order to gain it. She must set out upon a mission largely conceived and nobly fulfilled. This is why the missionary movement of the Church, with all its mistakes, is yet so grand a thing, and still stirs the imagination of all who rightly know what it is. It has been called, and rightly called, "the one indisputably Christian flag flying at present . . . . the

only answer that the Church can make to a world at war,"* The missionary enterprise, not merely as an approach to non-Christian nations, but as a challenge to all the vast denial of Christ in these "Christian" lands, provides the call men need to-day. The Church has at its disposal material that cannot fail to thrill and stir the youth of the country, it has before it a task worthy of the best energies of all. Can it place these before men in any way adequate to the situation? The Church exists not for itself but for the Kingdom of God.

Anyone who has found that purpose must look back upon a life lived in isolation, for personal ends, or with no clear sense of mission, as indeed a poor, colourless thing. How hard it will be for many who have been lifted out of themselves by the call of their country in these days to go back to a monotonous life in which no great purpose fills its dullest moment with meaning and value. This is the opportunity for a great religious word to be spoken, even the word that Jesus spoke in Galilee. Let them hear not simply the call of country, but that of humanity. Let them enlist not simply for the duration of the war, but for a life-long campaign. Let them know that this purpose links them with the age-long purpose of a loving God. What are the possibilities of such a movement none can measure. It must not be a movement

* Dr. Orchard, in "The Outlook for Religion," p. 206.

only of the officers. No amount of skill on the part of "religious leaders" can bring it about. It must be a movement of the rank and file. Democracy fired with a purpose in harmony with the purpose of God—that is what Christ dreamed of. Is it not something like this that the leaders of our modern labour movement have seen when they have dared to plan for an international socialist conference in time of war? The dream is not infinitely remote: it is within the purpose of God: and, therefore, it is within the reach of man. It is still true that the Kingdom of God is at hand.

THE DEMAND FOR HARMONY

What is it to choose Peace ? 'Tis not to choose
Ease, that dumb ease that rests while Angels lose ;
It is to fasten this proud petulant me,
Motionless Christ upon the Cross to Thee :
It is to choose that the strong swordsman's hand
Shall be nailed fast, powerless to withstand,
That the quick feet transpiercéd shall not move,
It is to have no weapon left but Love ;
And to believe in this so utterly,
That Love bound is unbound, Love nailed is free."—M.B.C.

VIII

THE DEMAND FOR HARMONY

LIFE involves a constant adjustment to environment. In fact, one of the chief distinctions between living and dead things is to be found in the fact that the former are always meeting the changes outside themselves by adaptations within, while the latter are simply at the mercy of the forces that play upon them. In the deeper life of man this is also true. The changing mental environment provokes in a living mind continual modification. The living spirit is always at work adjusting itself to the spiritual environment, that is to say, to other spirits, and to the universal spirit that we call God. Personality is thus seen to be an achievement won through constant inner adjustments, enlarging as it comes into touch with other persons, growing as it lays hold of new truth, and learns to appreciate new beauty.

One of the deepest instincts of the living spirit is that which sets towards harmony—a perfect adjustment between the individual and the surrounding persons and things. The long story of the race witnesses eloquently to the sense of disharmony, and to the results

of such disharmony in the lives of individuals, and in the body politic. Some may look chiefly at the struggles between families, tribes, nations, races, the feuds that seem an inseparable part of social life the world over, the suicidal wars, the class hatreds, the race prejudices that have left their mark in every age and in every part of the world. Others may concentrate their thought rather on the age-long search for peace on the part of men and women who have had an inward conviction that they were themselves out of harmony with the universe. Whether by long contemplation they seek to enter into Nirvana, or by countless sacrifices to appease an angry God, they bear witness alike to the dissatisfaction of the human spirit, the sense of maladjustment to the spiritual environment. When Augustine said: "Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee," he was but expressing the experience of the race in the particular language of his own faith.

It is, however, a great mistake to suppose that the harmony men seek is a state of utter quiescence. There are times, no doubt, when the weary spirit seeks the complete rest of inaction. But this is a temporary need, and great confusion has arisen in religious writing and thinking by failing to distinguish such a passing emotion from the eternal passion for a right adjustment. The one is a

demand of exhaustion, and may be satisfied by sleep, or even by death itself. The other is the demand of a full active life, seeking to realise itself without constant friction. The jarring of the machine that is working badly can be cured either by bringing the machine to a standstill, or by repairing and oiling it so that it will run smoothly. The orchestra that is out of tune can have its disharmony removed either by ceasing to play or by bringing every instrument into perfect harmony. The fundamental human demand is to go on, but to go on without the discords. Can religion give the answer ?

The religious history of mankind curiously illustrates the two different methods. Men have always turned to religious institutions and leaders in order to find peace. The answer has often been simply to offer sleep or death. The Buddhist answer is essentially this. There is much that is beautiful and even inspiring in Buddhism, but its failure to meet the deepest need of men, even at this point, lies in its static conception of blessedness. The one thing it *seems* to offer is harmony. To the spirit exhausted with the fruitless search, oppressed with a weight of sin, the attraction of the life of contemplation may seem irresistible. But sleep itself brings back the latent instincts of life, the passion to be up and doing. The craving for harmony cannot be answered thus.

Christianity, in so far as it offers a static religion, is in like case. A creed that enshrines a certain position, however hardly won in the past, cannot meet the demand of a new age that needs to find itself, in the mental and spiritual exercise of achieving a creed for itself. The Roman Catholic Church seems to the writer, though he would wish to speak of it with all respect, to offer a place of rest, or even of stagnation, to the mind and to the spirit, rather than to supply the inward demand for harmony in action.

On the other hand, the Protestant Churches present a multitude of petty divisions. How can an earnest man tell which to join, naturally supposing that by communion with one he cuts himself off from others? Harmony does not seem to be the keynote of the Church in her own life, in spite of the fact that this is what she offers to men. It is not only the mere fact of outward and confusing divisions. Unfortunately, the sections, which might easily be parts of a co-ordinated whole, are at war with one another. Close scrutiny reveals the fact that within the life of each section there are warring parties, that the life of particular congregations is not free from personal grudges and petty factions. The Class war, fed upon snobbishness and patronage, as well as upon economic distinctions, finds a place in too many Christian congregations, that is to say in the very place

where such distinctions should be lost sight of, and such snobbishness purged away. When the community is rent by great divisions, as in this present war, the Church appears broken and at war. Each State finds within itself a Church, called by the name of the Father of all, prepared to pray as to a tribal God, and to christen as "holy" a struggle that cuts the one family into parties bitterly hating and seeking by every conceivable device to destroy one another. Neither in international life nor in the great economic conflicts has the Church been seen by the world as the great reconciler. Yet surely this is an integral part of its mission in the world.

Protestantism, then, seems to have failed in the other direction. It has recognised the demand for progress. It has seen that liberty means something other than dead uniformity. But it has failed to find the internal adjustment. It has left the parties to fight it out, and has not really given any adequate answer to a distracted and discordant world.

When we turn to Jesus Himself we are at once met with a strange contradiction. While He offers rest to men, He says: "I came not to bring peace but a sword." He says that He will set men against their nearest and dearest, and a man's foes shall be those of his own household. He Himself was brought into fierce conflict with the people of His own time, both in the country town of Nazareth

and in the metropolis of Jerusalem. His whole public life seems to have been a conflict ending in a pitched battle. How can He give us the harmony we seek ?

To understand Jesus aright we must never look only at one side of His life, or at one carefully selected group of His sayings. This same man offered peace to men. "My peace," He says, "I give unto you : not as the world giveth give I unto you." Perhaps of all His sayings the best known and most loved is : "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Moreover, when He spoke of "My peace," He referred to something which He possessed. There was a balance, a harmony, an inward adjustment, a poise, about His life that impressed men. "Fear not" was a characteristic utterance many times repeated. Looking back at Him, in the light of actual experience, Paul says, "He is our Peace." There is something in Him that assures us that these offers are not vain. His life witnesses to their reality.

It is clear, then, that Jesus had a message for men in regard to this question of harmony, but that it is not quite a simple one. The fact of the matter is that He saw peace as an inward achievement, He found harmony at the very heart of things, and He knew that only a superficial appearance of it was to be gained by any short cut. Such an appearance

might be gained by coercion, the dead level of uniformity under slavish obedience to a common will; it might be achieved by compromises, the method of give and take irrespective of fundamental principles; or it might be found through inaction and stagnation. None of these methods touch the real heart of the problem. For Jesus, there was an ultimate will in the universe, and that will was the Father's. He found His own inner harmony by first adjusting His life to meet the demands of that will. He was able to say, "I thank Thee that Thou hearest Me always," thereby showing that for Him the harmony was unbroken. This experience and conviction assured Him that a harmony in all human affairs was realisable, and He sought to win men into an appreciation of the Father's will, and a willing acceptance of it. Such a policy would, He well saw, involve discords wherever this loving will met selfishness, hatred or pride. Reconciliation by change of heart is the method of Jesus. It is the long hard road to harmony, but it does lead there—and no other will. Everything most worthy of attainment in human life costs. As the Irishman says, "You get nothing for nothing in this place, but you get something for something." Harmony is to be won through discord, but it can be won. That is the message of Jesus.

It is also evident that Jesus' idea of

harmony was a harmony in action. Following the words in which He offers rest to the weary, He says, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." He called men to find rest in common labour, and labour shared with Him. That is to say, He saw peace as a true working adjustment, by which you did not pass out of life, but you found life was livable. His contact with men illustrates the same point. He found the fishermen of Galilee unsettled. They were craving for something they could not name. He helped them to find a hitherto undreamed-of scope for just those faculties which they had developed in the life by the lake. "I will make you fishers of men," is a call to a new adjustment to the larger spiritual life. Harmony could not be found for such daring spirits in the cramped life of daily toil. Matthew the tax-gatherer, adding shekel to shekel, had in him some larger possibility that chafed against the narrow limits of his soul-destroying work. Jesus put His life into a larger setting, gave him a greater thing to do, and so restored harmony. Saul, the Pharisee, irked by the myriad restrictions of an exacting legalism, spending his zeal in a cause that always soured it into fanaticism, heard the call of One who knew how hard it was for him to "kick against the pricks," and found harmony in a task of unsurpassed

magnitude and difficulty. Such is the call of Jesus Christ to the life of peace.

As long as men will think of peace negatively, as a state into which we may lapse when work is done, as simply society without war, or business without strikes and lock-outs, so long shall we be disappointed in our search for it. If we are to live at all, there must be action, effort, growth. "The glory of going on" is an essential and eternal glory, as far as we can judge. If not, life has not the same meaning in the world beyond as it has in this. So here and now it is given us to find out how we may progress harmoniously. The religion that denies progress, and the religion that despairs of harmony, are alike doomed The religion of Jesus Christ does neither, nor does it turn only a blind eye to the universal sense of discord. It recognises the jarring elements, it proclaims with certainty a possible reconciliation, it finds the greater harmony through progress in the way of love.

In facing the facts we are brought into some sense of the world's suffering. We find that there is some twist in human nature, explain it how we will, that offers a resistance to love, and that the crucifixion of love is not an isolated phenomenon in history. It is borne in upon us that man has it in him to destroy harmony, to put himself on the side of the enemy, and that, even when we stand for the

best in another, we are liable to be misunderstood and rejected by him. "He came into His own, and they that were His own received Him not." So, seeking peace, we may yet find the sword.

The Cross of Christ has been seen as the recognition of this great discord, showing how even the divine heart is brought into unity with the suffering of men through their revolt against the way of love. It has, however, meant more than a mere recognition It has, meant a reconciliation. The phrases that describe that reconciliation may savour of a legalism very foreign to our modern way of thinking. They may even be used in a way that, to some minds, deprives of any moral and spiritual force that which has been the most dynamic event in history. We are not concerned here with any theory of the atonement, but, when men have said again and again, through the centuries, that the Cross of Christ has brought them peace with God, they have witnessed to an experience that cannot be dismissed as a mere passing expression. They have seen in the Cross the true inner meaning of the world's sense of maladjustment, they have seen sin as a failure to adjust our single wills to the eternal will that is unchanging love, they have seen that this fault of ours is not repudiated in scorn, but borne in pity and sorrow by the great Lover of our souls. The cry of faith

has been and still is, " He bore our sins in His own body on the tree ! " And, as men, broken down by so great a love, have thrown themselves in simple trust upon the never-failing goodness of God, they have turned to Him who died on Calvary as to their Saviour, the very Prince of Peace. The secret of harmony is to be found nowhere but in the heart of the Father wonderfully opened up to us in the death of the Son.*

In proclaiming reconciliation we have need not simply of a theory proved by logic and held with tenacity, but of an indwelling certainty that the forms of argument can never confound. This certainty is our peace. The world can neither give it nor take it away. It comes to us, we scarce know how, as the wind of which it is said that we know not whence it cometh or whither it goeth. It may be an infection we have caught from some other person, or from Christ Himself, in whose nature it was so fundamental. It may have developed slowly through painful processes of thought, but somehow it is sealed to us inwardly, and we can only say :

" Yea, with one voice, oh world, though thou deniest,
Stand thou on that side, for on this am I."

In finding our harmony through progress in the way of love, we know the joy of battle, and with it the sweetness of fellowship with

* A careful discussion of this question will be found in Rev. W. F. Halliday's book in this series, " Reconciliation and Reality."

all that is lovely and true. The passion for harmony that is in the heart of the divine becomes our passion. We rejoice to find in others that which answers to the deepest in ourselves. We refuse to dwell upon the discords, we learn to pick out the true notes, and for us there is a symphony which other ears may not catch. And this we know to be the ultimate song of the universe, the song of beings working together in love for a purpose transcending that of any one life, or class, or race. It is the family music of the children of God. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

THE
DEMAND FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

As Socrates denied that justice could be found apart from the ideal of human society, so Jesus made righteousness correlative to the Kingdom of God. It is the glory of God, not that He gives to men according to their deserts, but precisely that He does not do so: in defiance of our petty notions of "rights," He is kind to the unthankful and the evil, and causes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good. They who act in like manner are truly righteous. The old limited notion of righteousness has in fact broken down, and the work of Christ is a new righteousness, a new justice.—C. HAROLD DODD.

But all through life I see a Cross,
Where sons of God yield up their breath:
There is no gain except by loss,
There is no life except by death,
There is no vision but by faith,
Nor glory but by bearing shame,
Nor justice but by taking blame;
And that Eternal Passion saith,
"Be emptied of glory, and right and name."

WALTER C. SMITH.

IX

THE DEMAND FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

THE human spirit seeks for something more than adjustment to environment. It has always, as far as we are able to judge, discriminated between one kind of environment and another. We have a deep conviction that to adjust ourselves to the wrong environment, or to the wrong elements in the environment, is sure to end in disaster, that it is essentially undesirable, even though it may be, for the time being, pleasant. By contrast we experience a sense of satisfaction in making a different choice. This faculty of the human spirit we may call the "moral consciousness." The existence of this faculty filled the mind of Immanuel Kant with a wonder akin to his awe in the contemplation of the starry heavens, so far beyond our powers of comprehension. Others have seen in it nothing but a "survival factor" in the evolution of the race, a development from a primitive social code, the observance of which, in the first human groupings, tended towards their permanence and their success in the struggle for existence.

It is not our purpose here to examine into the meaning of this faculty, but rather simply

to recognise it, and further to point out that, behind the moral consciousness, there is an inward sense of compulsion that urges men towards certain courses of action. This compulsion we may call conscience. It is not to be identified with the moral consciousness although it operates through it. The latter depends much upon education, the civilisation in which we live, and so forth. We are constantly under the necessity of adjusting our moral judgments on specific situations to fresh data. The fact that we do not possess all the data cannot remove from us the duty of decision and action. We must act according to our present light recognising that fresh light may yet break forth. The moral consciousness says: "This is the way": the conscience adds: "Walk ye in it." When a man conscientiously does what others feel to be wrong, they may be quite right in trying so to train his moral consciousness as to lead him to a different view of right and wrong; they are certainly wrong in seeking to compel him to act contrary to the inward compulsion that causes him to act in accordance with the judgment he has arrived at. One is the education of the moral consciousness: the other is the violation of the conscience.*

* I owe much of the above paragraph to my friend, Rev. Seaward Beddow, of Wycliffe Church, Leicester. The phrases, conscience and moral consciousness as here used, may be open to some objections from a philosophic point of view. The distinction between the two elements which contribute to moral actions seems to me valuable and true to religious experience.

Accepting, then, nothing more than the fact that men, in all stages of civilisation, do recognise a fundamental difference between right and wrong, and a sense of duty in regard to the performance of that which they recognise as right, we may proceed to enquire into the answer to this instinct which is offered by religion. We know that for conscience sake men have sacrificed life and liberty, pleasure, ambition, friends. It has been one of the strongest factors in human history. It has led to wars : it has destroyed great empires ; it has inspired some of the noblest deeds and the most daring adventures in the annals of the race. Whatever theory we have in regard to it, the student of the human mind can never close his eyes to the demand for righteousness.

Not every religion has recognised this demand as coming within its proper sphere, although probably all have, in practice, owed to its prevalence much of their sway over the hearts of men. What is known technically as the divorce of religion from ethics is a phenomenon peculiarly prevalent in any priest-ridden system. It is due, in part, to the double-standard already referred to, but also to the much greater ease in obtaining sway over the minds of others by offering a series of rites which can be performed for them, than by demanding of them a certain kind of life. Once persuade a man that the demand for righteousness can be met by his

becoming a spectator at certain ceremonies, by his paying money to certain persons, or even by penances and pilgrimages, and he will surely take the easier path, and thereby not only miss the true goal of right living, but also put himself into bondage to those who have thus persuaded him. He thus virtually surrenders the right of individual judgment, and this opens the way to the reign of casuistry and sophistry.* The assumption that the demand for righteousness can be met by someone *for* me means that I must accept that person's idea of righteousness. I thereby class myself as something less than a full moral personality, which is, from the nature of the case, an immoral decision. In this matter, too, there is no short cut, however attractive it may seem. Lay religion insists that the

* Dr. Forsyth's book on the Christian Ethic of War, already referred to, is an outstanding example of this. This volume not having a controversial aim, no attempt is made to meet Dr. Forsyth's amazing exposition of righteousness. The reader is referred to W. E. Wilson's pamphlet, "Dr. Forsyth and the War," 6d., Headley Bros. See also the argument on "War: the Cross of the Nations," by L. Swetenham, whose previous book on "Religious Genius" really prepares us for the argument in this later volume. She says: "God does not scruple to sacrifice wholesale the body to the soul. He sweeps human lives in hundreds and thousands from off the face of the earth, or subjects them to a discipline of great suffering for the sake of some gain to the spirit. . . . He is prepared to pay a heavy ransom in the death and suffering of millions upon millions of human bodies, in order that the spirit of the race may be quickened." It is small wonder that a reviewer (not a pacifist) writes: "In our view the idea of God which lies behind this little book is quite damnable, and wholly at variance with the teaching of our Lord." Student Movement, April, 1917. *Cf.* by way of contrast "Grace and Personality," p. 132.

demand must be met in each man's own life : it is inexorable ; no final satisfaction can be found which does not transform the man himself—not only his outward acts, but the very springs of his being.

It has generally been admitted by students of religion that Judaism and Christianity stand out among other great world-religions by reason of their frank recognition of this moral demand. For them it would seem that religion must be ethical if it is to be worthy of the name of religion at all. While Hinduism has concentrated on securing harmony, and has often been associated in its religious rites with terrible breaches of the moral law, Confucianism has concentrated on right living, and has given so little satisfaction to the spiritual demands as to leave the way open in China for other supplementary religions. The religion of the Bible, by contrast, has based its morality on a spiritual conception, and its spiritual message is essentially a call to right living. This is illustrated in the Old Testament by the Psalmist's conception of sin ("Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned") as something primarily involving the marring of God's purpose for human life,* and by the ancient prophets, who railed against a religion of outward rites, and whose characteristic word was, "What doth the Lord require of

* For a suggestive treatment of this question, see "Philosophy of Christian Experience," by Henry W. Clark, Chap. V., "Repentance."

thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah vi. 8).

It is, unfortunately, true that this idea of religion is not uniformly given by the Church to those who approach her from the outside, nor is it fully held by those who belong to her fold. A certain measure of that legalism against which the more spiritually minded leaders of Judaism continually protested has crept into the Church, or, it may be, has persisted since early times. The external standard has been applied, as is, perhaps, only natural, when attention is fixed upon membership in a great and respectable institution. It is certainly true that "By their fruits ye shall know them"; but it sometimes seems as if this test had resulted in an effort not so much to bear true fruit as to give the appearance of a good tree by tying good fruit on decayed branches. Has the Church borne as strong a testimony against pride of place, greed of gain, contempt, evil suggestion, hardness of heart, as against theft and murder and prostitution?

An even more searching question must be asked. Has not the way in which the central fact in the Christian Gospel has been presented to the world actually tended to create that divorce between right living and a right spiritual attitude which it is the urgent duty of the Church to abolish for ever? Is the

protest of prophet and psalmist needed by our modern religious life almost as much as it was needed when they first gave forth their stirring messages ?

As everyone knows the central idea of the Protestant Reformation was "justification by faith," a thought which did untold service in liberating men's minds from the terrible burdens of a legalistic religion, and from fear of the priests in this world and the devil in the next. It did much to sweep away the system of penances, and the whole assumption of salvation by merit, as if the future happiness of man depended on his exact performance of certain ceremonies, and his always keeping on the right side of the Church authorities. This great emancipating truth became, however, in the hands of mere scholars, a doctrine to attack and defend. Its statement became formal, and, as was inevitable, it not only lost its power to set men free, it actually became a fetter, and a bad one at that.

Without attempting to trace the various stages of decadence and revival that have followed, it may fairly be said that to-day, in the minds of very many, the death of Christ for the sins of the world is thought of as a thing apart, which can be appropriated for oneself by a certain intellectual or spiritual attitude. While, for very many in the Churches, this great event in history corresponds in some way with the greatest event in

their own moral and spiritual experience, it is nevertheless true that it has often appeared, and does now appear to many, as an external fact, which justifies them in assuming that, so far as they are concerned, the demand for righteousness has been met once for all. But the demand for righteousness is not simply the demand of an external authority, however august, who insists upon certain things being done either by or for the person conerned. It is, as we have already seen, the inward demand, which may indeed correspond to an outward order, but which, because it is inward, can never be satisfied by anything short of an inward reaction. The profoundest moral happening in the world's history, which has awakened the most revolutionary moral response in countless human spirits, can actually be set forth in a way which not only deprives it of moral value, but actually makes it appear immoral to many of the finest natures. *Corruptio optimi pessima.*

In the midst of this eternally perplexing question, we seek the word of Jesus. We do not want to ask here what His answer may be to the problem of evil, why it exists in the world if God be indeed a loving Father. We do want to ask how He actually deals with it. Has He given us an answer to this human demand that is truly satisfying ? This question is, for our purpose, crucial. The answer

carries us back to His interpretation of human life. Before we try to discover how He met the demand, we have to ask how He interpreted it. The diagnosis precedes the treatment.

There is no doubt that Jesus recognised righteousness as a fundamental concern. He calls us to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. He blesses those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, and promises them satisfaction. To those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, the Kingdom of Heaven is assured. But what is God's righteousness? Clearly it is something very different from the current conception. The followers of Jesus are called to a righteousness which shall exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees. No one could be more punctilious than they in the observance of outward law. Such a call might well fill with dismay, if not with despair, those who first heard it, and who were accustomed to look up with admiration to these zealous and law-abiding religious leaders. When we read the words, we associate them with the picture of these men seen through the eyes of Jesus. To His first hearers these very men were models of righteousness.

It is evident, then, that Jesus did not simply call men to an excess of that kind of righteousness, but to an altogether new kind of righteousness. It is a very obvious remark

to say that what Jesus demanded was an inward righteousness rather than an outward observance. This is profoundly true, but it is not all the truth. While the standard must be inwardly applied, it had also to be a different standard, and it had to be followed in a different way.

When Jesus spoke of God's righteousness, He referred not to an abstraction of the schools, but simply to what He felt inwardly to be according to the nature of the loving Father whom He identified with God. He saw in His Father one who seemed almost careless of what men regard as justice, the vindication of right by punishment of wrong.* The Father makes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust, and, if we are to be perfect *as He is perfect*, we are called not to give a man the "just reward" for his unwarrantable assault, but to turn the other cheek, not to escape the unjustified compulsion, but to walk the second mile, not to send a man to prison for taking away our coat, but to give him our cloak also.

* The idea of punishment being necessary to vindicate righteousness is so common as to be assumed without argument, and leads to a conception of life and the work of the Church which seems very far from that of Christ. Cf. Rev. R. H. Malden in "Watchman, What of the Night?" Chapter VII.: "There is such a thing as abstract Justice. Wrong-doing deserves punishment because God is Just. The course of the world leads many people to doubt whether He be really Just, and it is, therefore, laid upon Christians to vindicate His character. This is the awful responsibility which attaches to the Christian Profession."

These may not be literal injunctions, but they do call for absolute obedience to their spirit, and they do reveal a new type of righteousness, whose "regulative principle" is love,* seeking the good of the enemy rather than the assertion of our rights and the redressing of our wrongs. God's righteousness, the kind we are to seek, that is to say, is supremely concerned with showing mercy, not by way of tempering the punishment so richly deserved, but as an expression of righteousness. He is faithful and *just* to forgive us our sin—showing His justice (righteousness) in forgiveness. The righteousness of God set forth in the teaching of Jesus is, above all else, loving, the expression of a Father's heart in relation to His children.†

This must not be taken to mean that God's righteousness is careless of whether we are righteous or not. This, indeed, according to Jesus, is the supreme concern of His love. That which brings men into the way of goodness is the unceasing love of a righteous Person. His "purity doth all our lusts condemn," so that we cannot for a moment think that our righteousness is a matter of indifference to Him. Yet from such purity

* See "Practice of Christianity," by Miss Dougall, from which I borrow this phrase.

† See article by C. H. Dodd in *Venturer*, May, 1916.

there ever issues the full stream of free forgiving love.*

Not only is the standard different, but it must be followed in a different way. We have already seen how a priest-ridden religion leads straight to casuistry. It was so in Judæa nineteen hundred years ago. Men, by a trick, called what should have been used to meet the parents' necessity "Corban," given to God, and thereby escaped the obvious moral demand. They tithed anise and mint and cummin and evaded the real meaning of the law. Jesus saw straight through all this. The way of righteousness must be followed in no pettifogging spirit, it must be accepted recklessly, regardless of consequences, not, as it were, bartering with God or with His representatives on earth.† Righteousness, according to Jesus, is a splendid adventure for

* No attempt can be made here to enter into the discussion as to the moral order of the universe, God acting in nature, etc. Suffice it to say that while recognising that, in the world for which God is responsible, wrong-doing meets with results that are ultimately disastrous, we may still hesitate before *identifying* the reaction of the universe towards wrong with the Father's method of leading His children into the way of right. The rough and ready justice of an impersonal order serves a certain purpose, though it also creates numberless problems, the earthquake, undeserved suffering, etc. The personal approach of the Father to each child is nicely adapted to the child's need, instinct with a tenderness and love that no impersonal order can express. This it is which wins us into the way of goodness. Other volumes in this series will explore this wide field, see especially W. F. Halliday's "Reconciliation and Reality."

† See the present writer's "Missionary Spirit and the Present Opportunity," pp. 71-74, 84-89.

which a man shall sell all he has, a world to be conquered which a man may not gain save by risking everything. Such a conception makes righteousness not only desirable from a sense of duty, but delightful in itself, not an irksome bondage, but the finding of all that is best in life.

It was thus that Jesus lived. For Him there was the great delight of doing the Father's will, sure of the Father's love. There was no keeping of a profit and loss account in His goodness. It was the spontaneous expression of a great love. Such a life was possible because His Father was for Him always present and always loving. Wonderful as is His teaching, His life surpasses it. His righteousness is, in fact, the expression of His sense of Sonship. There is no need of the continual adjustments to the hardness of men's hearts that make us talk of "necessary evil." We are always trying to justify half measures by some formula of expediency. This is fundamentally a lack of faith. We are not sure enough of God to seek His righteousness with all our hearts. Jesus was sure, and so for Him, and for all who follow Him, the performance of the moral law becomes essentially a spiritual act. Religion and morality are inextricably bound together. The religion of Jesus does offer complete satisfaction to the demand for righteousness.

It is only as we keep this view of righteous-

ness before us that we can have the right approach to that most moving mystery that is at once the completest expression of righteousness as understood by Jesus, and the means by which that righteousness became an effective force in the lives of men and in human history. Without attempting any metaphysical explanation, let us state the bare historical fact that Jesus died when He might have lived because He chose the way of God's righteousness, which meant absolute, unwavering love, that He deliberately put away the thought of using carnal weapons in His defence, that He continued to love His enemies to the very last, even making excuses for them with His dying breath, and that He did all this in the simple conviction that the Father's love could never fail, whatever the appearances to the contrary. His idea of righteousness, as embodied in Himself, met the current idea of a legalistic, outward, compromising righteousness as embodied in the religious leaders of His time. It seemed to break down. The testimony of the Church, the one supreme fact to which the first Christians bore witness, the one thing for which, with all her faults, the Church has surely been worth preserving, is the assertion that this was not failure but success. Wherever men have so seen the death of Jesus of Nazareth, new hope has been quickened in them, a new life has come to birth, the way of righteousness

has had a new meaning for them—there is, as Paul puts it, "a new creation."

How we may explain these results, let us leave the theologians to discuss. Countless men and women who have had no explanation to offer have found a deeper meaning in life at the Cross of Christ. They may even have held views that are demonstrably false, such as those referred to earlier in this chapter, yet, in so far as a change towards God's righteousness has taken place in them, they have been partakers in the virtue of this great act. In so far as they have only been spectators, repeating a lifeless formula, or partaking in a formal rite, they have passed by on the other side. The demand for righteousness can only be satisfied as we become righteous. The divine purpose is not the vindication of abstract justice but the creation of just persons. They who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled.

THE DEMAND FOR POWER

Be not ashamed, my brothers, to stand before the proud and the powerful
With your white robe of simpleness.
Let your crown be of humility, your freedom the freedom of the soul.
Build God's throne daily upon the ample bareness of your poverty,
And know that what is huge is not great and pride is not everlasting.—SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

Instead of beginning with love and realising that love is power, we interpret God primarily as omnipotence and omniscience, and then, in the midst of this resistless flood, some place is sought for the moral personality.

DR. OMAN.

X

THE DEMAND FOR POWER

It is not enough to have fine ideals, and to be able to recognise them in others. We want to carry them out. Many a religion which has set up a beautiful picture of human society has failed to provide any sufficient force to bring it into effect. Many who are deeply moved by the appeal of goodness and truth have a sense of moral impotence, which is only increased by the magnitude of the moral demand. We have a passion to achieve, to succeed, but how are we to do it? Taught by past failure, we may be on the verge of despair. If religion is to have any meaning for us, it must give power. There are great opposing forces which seem to have almost limitless power, and there is the dead weight of inertia that stands in the way of all human progress. As George Adam Smith puts it: "The great causes of God and Humanity are not defeated by the hot assaults of the Devil, but by the slow, crushing glacier-like mass of thousands and thousands of indifferent nobodies. God's causes are never destroyed by being blown up, but by

being sat upon."* The worst of it is that we find a measure of this inertia in ourselves. Who shall deliver us from the body of this death ?

Every healthy-minded man or woman desires to be strong. Strength, even mere physical strength, has constantly been a quality calling forth veneration and even worship. The vicious seek power to practise vice, the good that they may be the better able to spread virtue. Men do not, however, agree in regard to the nature of the power they desire. We need a standard of value in regard to power, or we may be seriously at fault in our search for it. Moreover, we need to consider the kind of power we use in relation to the end to be gained, a matter far too often neglected.

To take first the question of value. Lowest in the scale is mere physical force. Such power is desirable. A man of good physique is better able to meet the demands of life than one who is sickly. Given equal power in other directions, he can undertake larger tasks, and serve his fellows more effectively. When physical force is made an end in itself, or when it is used in the interest of evil, it becomes a menace to human society. It is a form of power that men and nations have coveted from time immemorial, but it has often been terribly misused.

* "The Book of Twelve Prophets," Vol. ii., p. 54.

We may take next the power of numbers. By this we mean not the mere weight of numbers as used in an army, but the power of a large number, or a majority, of free persons acting together voluntarily. In such combinations we are dealing with a higher kind of power than mere physical force. Behind this power is freewill, the mind acting in response to impulses of various kinds. Human society, as at present organised, is very largely at the mercy of such combinations. Democratic institutions assume that this is a force to be trusted, but, while that is very largely true, this power also is capable of disastrous misuse in the over-riding of minorities, the arrogant assumption that the majority is always right, the unscrupulous engineering of majorities for ulterior ends.

The power of the mind possessed of intelligence and knowledge is of a superior order to the power of a mere majority. One man can stand up to a multitude. By his superior skill or greater knowledge, he can outwit or overcome them. The informed and well-directed will is ultimately greater and assuredly on a higher level than any number of uninformed and ill-directed ones. Mere physical force and mere numbers cannot stand before one who, by the power of the mind, has captured the secrets of nature, and made her powers available as his servants. The dominance of the white over the coloured

peoples is an outstanding illlustration of this form of power.

Yet even such power may be destroyed by moral weakness, and may fail before moral courage. Character tells in the long run, and many are the instances of the failure of skill and knowledge through the persistence of a bad habit, through untrustworthiness or lack of stamina. No doubt the immoral often seem to succeed when they meet the moral: but all serious students of human nature would give a higher place in the scale of ultimate values to character than to simple intellectual brilliance.

Is there anything even higher in the scale of values than this moral power? If the true interpretation of the universe be a spiritual one, must not the very highest form of power be spiritual? Such power is discovered and exercised in the deepest realm of personality. It is the power we find in communion of spirit with others, and, above all, in communion of spirit with the Father of Spirits. It has in it an element of all lower forms of power. It depends upon physical conditions, because the medium of communication is a physical body. It requires the co-operation of a free will. It brings into its service the informed mind. It demands the moral nature at its highest, for the pure in heart are those who see God. But it cannot be contained within any one of these categories.

It is the power we are conscious of when we are in the presence not only of absolute rectitude but also of tender love. It wins its way not by brute force, by weight of numbers, by skill, or even by force of character, but supremely by the power of persuasion, tenderness, an understanding sympathy, the oneness brought about through love. For love is the link between person and person. It is the one unfailing channel of spiritual intercourse. It brings the spirits of men together as nothing else can. It is enlarging, liberating, creative. And this is why we can say God is love, for He is continually moving out to men, establishing communication with them inwardly, breaking down their indifference and opposition, not by *force majeure*, but by the "patient endurance of love."* If personality be the ultimate thing of worth in this world, love must be the highest kind of power.

In the light of these considerations, we may consider the second question referred to above, namely the relation of the kind of power used to the end in view. Religious thinkers have paid far too little attention to the question of method. Jesus never made this mistake. For Him, once the end was defined, the method was all important. The use of any method which in itself denies

* "Church and the Divine Order," Dr. John Oman, p. 17.

the end in view is clearly forbidden. The fact that such methods are constantly used may be due to one of three causes ; a failure clearly to see the end, the view that the method does not matter—" the end justifies the means "—or such an engrossment in the work in hand as to lead to forgetfulness of the method used. Whatever the reason, the result is sure to bring disaster sooner or later. This is the heart of the Christian objection to war. The purer the end in view, the more clear is it that the terrible method of war actually denies that end. Liberty depends on the worth of human personality. Honour between nations has no meaning apart from this conception. If, however, in order to secure these ends, liberty and honour, we use a method that actually degrades the value of human personality, treating it merely as a machine, and wounding the spirit of love through which alone human personality can reach its true fulfilment, then, by that method, we destroy the very things for which we strive. Honour is degraded, liberty is curtailed, the value of men and women as spiritual beings is debased, they become means rather than ends in themselves.*

* See essay on " Personality " by Rev. W. F. Halliday, in " Christ and Peace." This thought deserves larger emphasis because the assumption is often made that the religious objection to war rests merely on a sentimental difficulty about taking life. " It is absurd," says R. H. Malden, *op. cit.*, " to draw any distinction between war and the use of force in other ways.

This study of the nature and use of power has seemed necessary if we are to see wherein we have missed the way, and how to secure the power we need for the enrichment of human life, and the achievement of the ends we have been considering. In face of a situation like the present world-war, the Church seems to many to be utterly powerless. What has she done, what can she do, to stay the tide of human hate and pride? Is it not a case for the Church to stand aside and confess, by her silence, if not by her speech, that she can have no influence upon these great happenings? While this represents the attitude of many outside the Church, there are others, and, among them, many reputed to be leaders, who see the Church's function in quite another way. They would have her throw the whole of her moral and spiritual force into the scale on one side or the other, showing in a clear way to the world that she has still power over the minds of men, and that she knows how to use it. If the Church can make clear the moral issues underlying the war, her voice may even be the deciding one in

There is no difference whatever in kind. The attitude which some people adopt towards the actual taking of human life is purely sentimental, and can claim no support from the Christian Gospel." This quotation not only makes the false assumption referred to, but confuses the issue by failing to draw any distinction between the restrictive and the destructive use of force. As well argue that, because opium is a poison, it cannot be used medicinally. The phrase "use of force" covers a whole world of unsound argument.

regard to the ultimate result. She will have vindicated her position as representing the greatest power on earth.

Both of these attitudes betray a mistaken view of the kind of power which the Church should possess and exercise. They illustrate her failure to see the real meaning of the Cross, which was not simply an expression of good intentions but an incomparable manifestation of power. Practically every religion and every Church has aimed, to some extent, at temporal power. The tragic mistake of the Christian Church occurred when she linked herself with the power of imperial Rome. In doing this she surrendered her greatest power, the power of the higher order, and began to use a kind of power inconsistent with her own ends. What this meant in the Crusades or the Inquisition it is easy enough to see. It is harder, perhaps, to recognise the extent to which this same mistake has been made by the Protestant Churches, and is affecting the impact of Christianity on the world to-day. While it is no longer supposed that the Church, as such, is justified in using force of arms in order to extend her own borders, is there not almost as great a danger in that close identification with the State which leads many good people to assume that the interests of the two are virtually identical? Who can be blamed for making this assumption when almost every single Church

in Christendom, as represented by its official leaders, has espoused the national cause in this war ?

More subtle is the reliance upon the power of numbers. The mere fact that a Church is large is supposed to give it power. Statistics of members are carefully kept, and used in a way that gives quite a false value to them. Prayer is organised so as to suggest that, if only we can get enough people praying for a certain end, we may thereby be able to persuade the Almighty to agree to do what we want. The minority, in particular the minority that opposes the supposed interests of State, is almost as much neglected or overridden in the modern Church organisation as in the frankly pagan State.

It is still more difficult to see where, by an undue reliance upon mental and moral power, the Church has failed to stand clearly for its one supreme possession—the irresistible power of personal love. Yet has there not been something like a worship of knowledge ? Has there not been a use of the power of personal magnetism,* for example in preaching and in revivalistic efforts, that tends to coerce the individual, and leave him spirit-

* Henry Drummond had great personal magnetism, and could hypnotise his students into doing any foolish thing in the middle of his lecture. When he joined Moody in revival meetings, he had to put a severe restraint upon himself, so that he might not use this power in a way which would injure the personality of his hearers.

ually weaker, instead of calling out his own latent strength? At least we may ask whether it is clear to all the world that the Church does really exhibit a power of a different order from that of any purely human institution, because she has learned the secret of union with God, that combination of divine and human force which is absolutely essential if the world is to be regenerated, and which can only be made available through love.

Jesus saw the problem with that sure instinct which probed the depths of the human mind, and, having seen it, He pointed the way to the acquisition of the highest kind of power. From reliance upon physical force He turned repeatedly. To children the Kingdom of God was peculiarly open. From anything like over-estimation of mere numbers He was astonishingly free. It was the little flock to which His Father had given the Kingdom. He who would be greatest should be the servant of all, not like those "Benefactors" who lord it over their subjects. Above all, He saw in God not simply infinite power, in the sense of ability to compel, to do whatever He liked with men, as an oriental potentate with his slaves, but the loving Father who draws men into willing obedience by nothing else but love.

He was opposed by all the powers of Church and State. The temptation to use

their weapons can never have been far absent from Him. It was through His vivid realisation of the Father's nature and the Father's presence that He continued to meet all this opposition in the simple strength of a loving spirit. Imperial Rome did not dazzle Him with her matchless display of physical force, her overwhelming numbers, her perfect organisation. The learning of Greece, profound and brilliant as it was, did not turn Him from the path. The stern morality of the finest type of Judaism, though undoubtedly powerful in its appeal, did not deceive Him. For Him the great reality was God, who is love. His spirit was pressing into human life, always drawing to Himself in love all who would be drawn. The power of God is love, and nothing else ; and thus it is that, as has been said, we see in the Cross of Christ the expression of the kind of power which God the Father uses. History has seen the decay of the power of Rome and her mighty legions : Greece, with all her learning, has been superseded : Judaism, with its moral force, has not proved sufficient. The Man who hung upon the Cross, defeated and despised, is seen to have a power over the spirits of men unmatched by that of any of the great world-powers of His day. It is the power of God and man combined in the might of unresisting love.

To-day the illusion of power threatens us

on every hand. The power of material wealth and physical force seems almost irresistible. We are in danger of being dazzled by their display to an extent never hitherto seen in the world's history. The power of organised masses of men, acting under the direction of a common will, threatens to destroy civilisation itself. Before the power of the mind, as it probes the hidden mysteries of the universe, and brings its vast forces under control, we stand amazed and even reverent. Here, surely, is the last word in human achievement. Yet we are constantly reminded, in this great war, that numbers and generalship and scientific invention are all insufficient without *morale*—that scarcely to be defined quality that is liable to upset all calculations. Amidst such a display of power in various forms, those who are prepared to trust to the power of love may well appear an insignificant, scattered and despicable minority. So it seemed in Galilee in the first century. But the question we must ask is not which side has the greatest physical force, which is the most numerous, the most skilful, or the most successful, but rather which has the true secret of power. Paul said long ago that the divine estimate did not coincide with the human one, that "God chose the foolish things of the world that He might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world that

He might put to shame the things that are strong ; and the base things and the things that are despised did God choose, yea, and the things that are not, that He might bring to naught the things that are." The Cross is still a stumbling-block and foolishness. But it is, to those who know its true meaning, "the power of God and the Wisdom of God."

This, then, is the answer to the demand for power that truly satisfies. It is not an easy lesson to learn. We seem to turn from the very thing we seek. But, if we once clearly see the end in view, if we appreciate the absolute necessity of using means consistent with that end, and if we find the answer to the riddle of the universe in the ultimate victory of love, we shall be in no doubt as to what power we shall choose. The demand for power is not an unworthy one, if it be sought for true and noble ends. If it be sought for its own sake, the highest form of power cannot be found. So men are constantly seeking to satisfy their craving f power by reaching after forms of it that must ultimately stultify themselves. All lesser forms of power break down ; love alone endures. He who builds on that rock need fear no storm. All other building is on the sand. This is Jesus' interpretation of life, and we have need to learn it again to-day like a new and undiscovered truth. Truly to

learn it is to be utterly fearless in the face of all other forms of power. The courage of perfect love casts out fear. He who possesses it is master of himself, and of all circumstances. "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

THE DEMAND FOR A LEADER

What moral serenity and sweetness pervade His life! What extraordinary tenderness and humility—what lamb-like meekness and simplicity! His heart was full of mercy and forgiving kindness: friends and foes shared His charity and love. And yet, on the other hand, how resolute, firm, and unyielding in His adherence to truth! He feared no mortal man, and braved even death itself for the sake of truth and God. Verily, when we read His life, His meekness, like the soft moon ravishes the heart and bathes it in a flood of serene light; but when we come to the grand consummation of His career, His death on the cross, behold He shines as the powerful sun in its meridian splendour!

—KESHAB CHANDRA SEN, leader of the Brahma Samaj of India.

XI

THE DEMAND FOR A LEADER

If religion is anything more than the cult of the individual soul, if it is what we have been considering in these pages, a splendid enterprise in which human spirits come together for common ends, it is clear that there is need for a leader in the great adventure. Every human endeavour needs leadership, and even the most democratic society ever invented or tried has depended to some extent upon the leadership of individuals. It is a wholly mistaken view of democracy to think of it as developing without any person or persons coming to the front. Differences of worth are one thing, and differences of function quite another. No human society can be maintained—it can scarcely even be conceived—without discrimination in the latter sense. So-called democratic ideas have frequently been pressed in a way that suggests a tendency to obscure this point. Because certain persons have arrogated to themselves positions of leadership, the reaction sweeps away all leaders, or chooses one but to knock him over and replace him by another. While a period of anarchy may be a very necessary and useful

stage in human development, it can scarcely be conceived of as the final stage, save by what amounts to a misuse of terms. The picture of a disordered state given in the book of Judges is summed up in the words : "Every man did that which was right in his own eyes." If every man's idea of right were the same, and all were guided primarily by consideration for the common good, this phrase would describe an ideal state—philosophical anarchy if you like. But it would, in reality, be a society guided by a common will, whether that will were incarnated in a supreme individual, or only in the community as a whole. In this sense, at least, there would be need of leadership even in a society of perfected persons with complete knowledge.

What we are now considering, however, is the method by which persons very far from perfect, and with manifestly incomplete knowledge, may best co-operate for certain ends. This problem requires some kind of leadership, the real crux of the matter is the kind of leader, and the method of choice. Given the right kind of leader, freely chosen by the persons who wish to combine, and exercising his functions in the right way, there need be no fear for the democracy in the midst of which he takes his place.

Before expanding these points, however, we must pause to recognise the fact that a great number of men and women desire to be

led. No doubt there are a few who chafe against all forms of authority, but the student of human nature is bound to admit that the bulk of his fellow-beings demand a leader. The success of authoritative forms of religion all through history is a clear proof of this. Even people much above the average in intelligence, such, for example, as John Henry Newman, may find themselves driven by the perplexities of the way to the acceptance of an outward authority which at one moment repels and at another attracts. Of course, the acceptance of a leader or an authority involves a definite act of will, but, that having been once concluded, the irksome responsibility of further choices is evaded, the individual leaves himself in the hands of his leader, content to go where he wills.* It is quite clear that such an attitude does not develop the personality. How can we have the full advantages of leadership without the subordination of the individual? Is there some admirable element in this widespread desire to be led?

Everyone recognises that hero-worship is, at any rate during the adolescent period, a desirable thing. Given the right hero, the growing child is more or less unconsciously guided to his own highest self, through admiration of the qualities of good in the hero chosen. But the instinct of hero-

* Cf. "The Christian Ethic of War," pp. 127, 128.

worship is not confined to one period of life, though most marked and remarked upon then. It is a fundamental human instinct, and almost everyone has some one or more ideal persons whom he would like to copy, in some, if not in all, of their qualities. The instinct of hero-worship is very closely akin to what we have called the demand for a leader.

This instinct has been recognised by almost every religious system known to us. Perhaps we may say that animism has scarcely met it at all, and Hinduism, while it has many heroic figures, does not centre round one individual as do Confucianism, Buddhism, Mohammedanism and Christianity. With the development of the mind of man, this instinct seems to become more clearly marked. The question we must ask is whether it is put to its highest use, or merely exploited in the interests of a particular class or a particular religious system. This brings us back to the enquiry into the kind of leader needed, and the method of choice.

To take first the second of these two questions, it will be generally conceded that a free choice should be made by each person. But it is, nevertheless, true that the spread of religion has very often been on a fundamentally different basis. To enrol the followers, whether it be of Mohammed or Christ, at the point of the sword, or by the terrors of the

Inquisition, is manifestly to deprive the idea of leadership of its moral value. However good the leader, to enrol followers for him in this way is to do an injury to them at the outset. No good qualities on the part of the leader can atone for this. Nor is it very much better to use superior knowledge, and an assumed authority, to coerce the mind and spirit into the following of a certain leader. To many the Christian Church appears as an institution designed to overawe the individual into the acceptance of Jesus Christ as his Leader. By an imposing array of arguments which the average man is powerless to refute, or by a display of authority, derived through many strange and imperfect channels, it may be, from the Most High Himself, the Church stands over the man, woman or child and calls him to a complete surrender to that great claim. The fact that in his inmost soul a man acknowledges the amazing worth of Jesus cannot compensate for a certain sense that he has been forced into the acceptance of His authority. He has been wounded where he ought not to have been wounded, and comes into the Church something less of a person than he was. This is not to say that pride and self-sufficiency should not be wounded when a man takes the great step of enrolling in the service of Christ. But this should not deprive him of a certain self-respect that is a part of true manhood. The

constant repetition of prayers of abject self-abasement, unless they become meaningless through familiarity, must have a degrading effect on many minds (such words, for example as "miserable offenders" and "there is no health in us" in the general confession). The choice of a leader must be a free choice, calling out all the best in the follower, enriching him, and enlarging his personality: otherwise it may be a disaster even if the leader himself be worthy of the choice.

What kind of a leader, then, do we need? Viewed again from the standpoint of democracy, we may say we need a leader who is one with the led, not coming from above, but raised from the ranks, and that he must be the servant of the community, not its "boss." Of course, in addition to this, he must have the qualifications of mind and heart needed to evoke enthusiasm, and to guide with skill. He must have courage, wisdom, patience, foresight, good judgment, tenderness, decision. It is, however, in regard to the first named qualifications that men to-day need reassuring. Jesus Christ has been seen by them as a superior order of being, very largely dissociated from their own life. He has been set apart, painted in beautiful pictures with a halo round His head, invested with all the attributes that are supposed to be proper to the Deity, and left dehumanised and remote. We are accustomed to address Him in a

strange language, and in set forms. Personal intercourse between a leader and his followers demands the easy terms of common speech, a growing knowledge of one another, which continually finds new forms of expression, an adaptation to the varying needs of the common enterprise, and to the degrees of intimacy on the part of the followers. To communicate with a living leader *only* through a manual of devotion or a set of printed regulations would obviously be inadequate. The theories about Jesus Christ which are held tenaciously by the Church are put in the wrong place. They are so obtruded upon the learner and the young as to mesmerise them with a sense of mystery and unfamiliarity. The enquirer is set to study the portrait when he ought to be introduced to the original.

All this gives the impression of distance. The leader is seen away at the front, only to be known through countless minor officials. The charm and infection of His own matchless personality cannot be conveyed in this way. We do not know where to place Him, but at least He is not one of us. Such a leader cannot be in any real sense a part of our everyday life, still less can he be the servant of the community. He is all very well for special occasions. He comes in to bless a marriage or to comfort a mourner. But the cry of the unsatisfied human heart, seeking an intimate Friend and Companion to lead and help in the

daily round, is that of Mary in the garden: "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him."

When we come face to face with Jesus of Nazareth, we find One who put Himself forward as a Leader without any hesitation. He called men to follow Him. He made claims for Himself which, even if we take them at their lowest, are extraordinary, if we take them at their highest are unique in human history. He saw men as sheep without a shepherd, and He offered to be their shepherd; as blind following blind leaders, and He would lead them aright; as subject to an authority in the past, and He would be an authority greater than Moses himself, who received the law from God on Mount Sinai. There can be no doubt that Jesus recognised the demand for leadership, and was prepared to meet it in His own person. But how?

In the first place, we have to remember that He lived a common life among men. He toiled with His hands for His daily bread, He walked the same roads, shared the same meals, used the same speech, wore the same kind of clothes, as those to whom His message came. No halo hovered around His head; no herald went before to proclaim Him a king; no books had been written to prove Him divine. To the men and women of Galilee He was one of themselves; and, if we are to understand

Him to-day, and to accept His leadership in the way He appeals for it, we must see Him as one of ourselves. His weakness, suffering, sorrow, temptations, death, made a deep impression upon all who knew Him, so much so that, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, we get a glimpse of the early apostacy of some of His Jewish followers, who could not see anything worthy of a Messiah in such a humble, tried and ordinary life.

What He asked of men, moreover, was their friendship and their free choice. He did not overawe men into following Him. He offered none of the ordinary rewards—quite the reverse. He told men that, if they would follow Him, they must forsake all, that they would have nowhere to lay their heads, would be persecuted and despised. There was no shadow of over-persuasion. Men must face all the consequences, and, when they saw how hard it was going to be, He turned to His immediate circle with the offer of release from the loyalty they had willingly undertaken, "Would ye also go away?"

Perhaps the most amazing thing about Jesus is the kind of leadership He assumed. Coming from among them, He would remain one of the crowd. "I am in the midst of you," He says, "as one that serveth." He saw that the true leader must be a servant. In our modern democratic organisations, we have made the same discovery. The secretary

of the Trade Union, chosen and paid by them, liable to dismissal, is the true leader. Even the President of the United States is a servant, and must recognise his position as such. How different from the oriental ideas of leadership! How far from the thought of the people among whom Jesus lived! In fact, they were determined, if possible, to have Him as a leader in a different sense. They tried to make Him king, and He refused. They called "Hosannah," when He entered Jerusalem riding on an ass. He tried and tried again to make them realise how utterly different was His idea of leadership from theirs. It might almost be said that He died in the attempt. Has ever human leader striven with more self-effacement to take the only place of leadership possible in a truly free and democratic society?

And how is this leadership to be exercised? Not by injuring the personalities of others, but by drawing out the best that is in them. As we see the real Man, Jesus the Carpenter of Nazareth, we see One who is worthy of the hero-worship of each of us. Something *in us* rises up to meet that winning personality. We know that to have met Him is to have found our true selves. Perhaps it has meant the revelation of something ignoble we had scarcely suspected. When this is seen, we may be filled with sorrow, like the young man with great possessions. We may even turn

away with fear and hatred, and seek to blot Him out of our lives. But, if we have truly seen Him, that will not be all. We shall have found a hidden treasure in ourselves, and we shall feel the pull of a new force drawing us towards the true goal of our manhood or womanhood. When men met Jesus, they were polarised; the good and bad were searched out; some were repelled and some were attracted. The same influence is still at work, explain it how we will, and it works in people of all races and colours. It is the sword that pierces until it divides soul and spirit, and "is quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Every great leader has this double effect on men. The judgment will pass upon a leader according to his followers—whom he attracts, and also whom he repels. There are, of course, many beautiful spirits outside the Churches. But is that the fault of the Church or of Jesus of Nazareth? To very many of these Jesus still stands supreme as the great attracting figure. He has won the allegiance of innumerable men and women, who have been drawn to Him, freely giving their best, and accepting His leadership. And these men and women have numbered in their ranks some of the purest, truest, strongest souls the world has ever seen. The fact that there are noble persons outside does not affect the present argument.

But where shall we find noble souls who, having seen Jesus, have not been drawn by Him, often acknowledging His pre-eminence, when they have been repelled by what have seemed to be the extravagant claims put forth on His behalf? If the human family is to find its oneness in the acknowledgment of one hero, in the following of one leader, who shall lead us forward to the true goal? Where shall we find one who will compare with Jesus? But let us be sure we do Him no true kindness when we seek to impose His leadership on any, or when we set Him forth as an irresponsible autocrat rather than as the Servant of all. In accepting His leadership, we are called to accept His idea of leadership, and that means, strangely enough, the idea of leadership we are beginning to envisage as the only possible one for a free society, knit together in love, and striving for the good of all.

The view of life for which we are here contending places human personality supreme, and, therefore, finds the fulfilment of the personality of the individual in relation with other persons. No principles, however good, no system, however perfect, no organisation or creed, can be truly satisfying. Men may indeed die for principles or for an organisation; but the worth of the principles can only be found through persons in whose lives they are embodied, and the worth of the

organisation is only that which it receives in and through the persons composing it. This consideration reinforces the recurrent demand of men for a leader for whom they will face all sacrifices, and in association with whom they find joy and satisfaction. In so far as Jesus Christ fulfils this demand will He be accepted by men, and come increasingly to occupy the first place in the life and thought of the race. The conviction, won from personal experience, that He can and will increasingly fulfil this demand, inspires the writer of this volume. Nevertheless, his desire is that men should accept the leadership of Christ not because he, or anyone else, has had such an experience, but because they, beginning where the first disciples began, have found in Jesus Christ a Man among men, the Person most worthy of their allegiance and love. Whether, having reached such a position, we can rest there, is a matter for each to decide for himself. It falls to be considered in the following chapter.

THE DEMAND FOR A KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

To come finally to the heart of the whole matter, something has somewhere gone wrong with the common Christian thought of God. Be it remembered that if such a lapse were an almost universal lapse, affecting the life of the advanced Christian as well as the life of the beginner, affecting the life of the whole church for many centuries and penetrating all its literature and works of devotion, it would be something which it would be almost impossible to detect, until some great common failure brought to light the common fall. We all inevitably judge our own conceptions of God and goodness by the standards which prevail in the society to which we belong, or if we go beyond these, by the venerable figures of the past. It is strange how under these influences we can all become blind to the one absolute Christian standard contained in the Divine Word. It may take some great emergency of extreme personal or social need to drive us past all these existing or historical standards, to make us all forget our own wisdom or our own folly, and to bring us as simple disciples back again to the Galilean spring-time and the morning of the Resurrection.

PROFESSOR D. S. CAIRNS.

XII

THE DEMAND FOR A KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

To write a book on religion, and yet not to come to a discussion of the nature and being of God until almost the end, may seem strangely perverse. No doubt it betrays the amateur! Yet the circumstance arises from no wilful perversity, but simply from the method adopted. We are not concerned with any definition of the nature of God, such as would be fundamental to a theological treatise; but rather are we considering the spiritual needs of the human personality, and it is not unnatural that, in such a psychological analysis, we should only come by degrees to that deep-seated craving which we have called the demand for the knowledge of God. If there be a God, it may fairly be assumed that in Him we should find the final answer to all human aspirations. But the best way to discover this answer will not necessarily be to start out upon the search for God, still less to assume at the outset certain theories about Him. Perhaps the answer will be given us as we seek for light upon the variety of human needs, each answer leading us back

to the ultimate one. Shall we, in short, begin with a theory, and see if it will fit the facts, or shall we begin with the facts, and see if they will lead us to a theory which may be firmly based upon them? In regard to religion, the great advantage of the second plan is that we at once clear the ground of a great deal of very poor theorising that may easily lead us astray. In fact, we can say at once that many of the current ideas about God are such as to give us little interest in discovering Him, or even a positive distaste for the occupation. Undoubtedly this method of beginning with the facts is the one *par excellence* for lay religion.

It must be admitted, however, that the search for God is not a matter of temperament, age or race. Even those who most strongly assert their denial of God, thereby show their interest in the problem. Even if the idea of God be but the vestige of a stage of civilisation we are fast leaving behind, or a convenient assumption for purposes of argument, for the socialisation of life, or for the education of the young, there is still a fascination in the discussion of the question that we cannot get away from. For most of us, however, there is much more than this at stake. The question is a vital interest of our lives. We are not really content to leave the whole matter in a state of uncertainty. Reverent agnosticism may be all that our

mental processes allow us, but our spirits yearn for something more. Some instinct we cannot wholly escape assures us that there must be some Being greater than the greatest man, that mind and even soul—personality—must lie behind all outward forms, and that, if that be so, there ought to be some possibility of association between that great mind and our small ones, that perhaps our discoveries of nature itself are, in some sort, a fellowship with the divine, and that it is not all a delusion when some of the finest human spirits tell us they have found a point of contact between themselves and the living God.

It is true that there are people who say quite positively that they are not religious, that they do not know this instinct, and that they regard its presence in others as the result of a certain type of education, or as due to an interpretation put, at an early age, upon instincts that have quite a different source. It may fairly be asked, however, whether this apparent absence of a " religious instinct " is not due to a complete misconception of religion—the very misconception we are here seeking to remove. But, even admitting that persons do exist who have no consciousness of a demand for the knowledge of God, it is not here possible to discuss every type of mind, and we must be content with accepting the fact, witnessed to by the prevalence of religions in every age and in every known

human society, that there is in most people an instinct that reaches out for knowledge of and fellowship with a higher power.

The *ex cathedra* method of meeting this demand is familiar to all. The assumption is made by the chosen few that the rest of us are little children who must be taught their alphabet, and that it is their duty to see that we make no mistakes. When we have learned it all from A to Z, and can repeat it at the requisite pace, we are supposed to have attained a knowledge of God sufficient for this world and the next. This method may have been all very well in the infancy of the race, but it simply won't do to-day. The catechism may still have a place in religious education, if it can be introduced late enough, and used in an entirely different way, though this is a matter of serious doubt to the present writer. Its influence in tending to stereotype the idea of God upon the minds of the young, and often a very inadequate idea at that, is wholly and utterly bad. In the very subject on which children should be our teachers, we presume to teach them—and to teach them the half-truths of forgotten controversies in a manner calculated to stop the growth of the tender plant entrusted to our care.

Words which are simply cloaks for our ignorance, and that cannot possibly call up any clear picture before our eyes, are freely and almost indiscriminately applied to God.

He is spoken of as Infinite, Almighty, Omnipresent, Inscrutable, Omniscient, and so forth. What is the effect of all these high-sounding abstract terms upon the lay mind? They simply remove God to a distance: they shroud Him in mystery: they serve the same purpose as the Holy of Holies, only to be entered once a year after all kinds of elaborate ceremonies. God becomes unreal: there can be no satisfaction to the human spirit, no sense of communion, as long as we dwell in the region of these absolutes. When we come to a discussion of their meaning, we are little, if any, better off. We find ourselves involved in metaphysical technicalities, the intricate balancing of phrases, the subtleties of Greek thought and mediæval dialectics. The doctrine of the Trinity, the exact significance of the word "Person," the problem of evil or of disease, the relation of God to the Universe,—all these questions, while they have an absorbing interest for some minds, and while, no doubt, they can be profitably discussed, and demand clear thinking and spiritual insight, leave the ordinary man cold. The mere discussion of theories about God has somehow got in our way. The heat of the discussion has often shown how far the disputants were from any true participation in the spirit of love and humility, and has served to turn away many reverent and sincere minds in shame and disgust.

If the theories advanced by theologians, or maintained by Churches, were absolutely correct, it would be bad enough, for the theory can, and often does, stand between men and God. It would, however, be easy enough to show that, whatever may be said on the ground of pure logic for many of the current theories about God, they are certainly not distinctively Christian. This is not the place in which to trace the pagan elements in these theories, the strain of Greek philosophy or Roman legalism that has crept in to distort and disfigure the view of God that came to men through Jesus Christ. When we come to explore that view, we may be able to see, in passing, some places where we have strayed into by-paths, instead of following the direct road He trod with such sure steps, and some where we have gone back to the very ideas He sought to destroy. Our main interest, however, lies in the satisfaction of the craving for knowledge of God Himself, not the intellectual search for knowledge about Him. Here the Churches have certainly succeeded, in spite of much misconception, in bringing large numbers of people into some true sense of fellowship with God. The actual connection has been made, in many cases, where the expression has been imperfect or even erroneous. If we were to wait until we had a perfectly water-tight theory of the Divine nature before the experience could be known,

we should probably have to wait forever. In human relations we often know one another when we know very little about one another. The acquaintance may even be formed on the basis of serious misconceptions. I may get to know a man, and become friendly with him, on the assumption that he is honest, or in the belief that he has certain knowledge which I desire. As the friendship ripens, I may discover his dishonesty, or the lack of the supposed knowledge. These things may interfere with full friendship ; but they need not destroy—in a sense they cannot destroy—the knowledge of one another already gained. So it is with the divine Being—so, indeed, it must be. For our knowledge of Him will always be incomplete, just as our knowledge of another human personality, even our best friend, is incomplete to the end, only more so. But the fellowship begun upon incomplete, or even erroneous, ideas may deepen, the ideas constantly being corrected and expanded with increasing intimacy.

This is not, of course, to say that our conception of the nature of God is immaterial—very far from it. According to man's idea of God so will be his acts—if, that is, he genuinely believes in God and worships Him. If, to turn back to the analogy, I base my actions upon the belief that my friend is honest, or that he possesses certain knowledge, I shall doubtless, at some point, be seriously let

down. The discovery of the mistake will not be less unfortunate because I quite sincerely supposed my friend to possess knowledge or honesty. In fact, the more sincerely I held to this view, the more fully I committed myself to it, the more complete will be my discomfiture Only the loosest thinking can be satisfied, in regard to the deepest of all kinds of knowledge, in the easy aphorism that "It doesn't matter what a man believes so long as he is sincere." It matters intensely, and the measure of his sincerity will be the measure of the seriousness of the consequences.

It can, in fact, be quite clearly seen that the present world-catastrophe is due to very deep and prevalent misconceptions about God. Those who hold that the Central Powers were solely responsible for the War see these misconceptions in the writings of Nietzsche, Treitschke and Bernhardi. It is easy enough to see them there. A deeper analysis of the situation will see them in all countries, and will realise that the Christian Churches have been suffering from them in a way which was bound to involve them also in the catastrophe. What is the way by which these misconceptions are to be removed? Not by further dialectics, by the abstruse argument as to whether God can be perfectly loving as well as perfectly holy, as to the measure of responsibility for the War which must be attributed to Him, or as to the limits of His

power. Such discussion is all very well in its way ; but it is like sitting down to argue as to the reliability of a man instead of getting to know him. The more we know him the surer we are to find the answer. The misconceptions about God are not going to be cleared away in the theological college, or even by disquisitions from the pulpit. They can only be dispelled as men and women the world over become increasingly aware of and intimate with God Himself.

This is what Jesus saw with startling clearness. Argument has scarcely any place in His teaching. There is no theorising about God : no abstract terms are applied to Him. Jesus simply sets forth God as He has known Him, and He calls His followers to a simple, childlike trust, in order that they may make for themselves the great discovery of the Father's love. He has no doubt of the result. That can safely be left with the soul and God.

Let us try to put ourselves in the place of the men and women who first knew Jesus. As has already been pointed out, He was for them simply one of themselves. Probably they knew nothing of the birth stories we find in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. In any case, these stories would not create such an impression of mystery on their minds as on those of subsequent generations, especially when they had Jesus Himself among them, when they knew His mother and His brothers,

had walked in and out of His shop, had seen and used the things He had made, and had experienced the sense of comradeship in countless little human ways.

They came to this acquaintanceship, which fast ripened into friendship, with certain very clear, if crude, ideas about God. These ideas can be studied in the pages of the Old Testament. There are many individual passages which give a more spiritual conception, such as we find more fully set forth by Jesus. But, broadly speaking, we may picture the God whom they worshipped as a terrible and austere Being, difficult of access, save at certain set times, known specially to and through a set-apart class of priests, a keen partisan of their own nation, though distantly interested, it may be, in other races, sternly righteous, and manifesting His righteousness through the punishment of the guilty, the Creator and Possessor of all—in short, a glorified Eastern Potentate, whose prerogatives must be jealously safe-guarded, whose dignity must not be infringed, whose subjects owed Him a servile obedience, and whose officials were a favoured and much-to-be-envied class.

It was men and women with some such thought of God as this who walked about the lanes of Galilee, who slept in the villages, who toiled on the lake, and who worshipped in the synagogues with Jesus, the Son of Mary, as

their constant Companion, for the space of two or three years. During that time, a revolution was taking place in their thinking. It is best described, perhaps, by the Greek word μετάνοια, so inadequately represented by our word "repentance." It was a change of mind, a new attitude towards the world, towards their fellow-men, and towards God. They found themselves, as a result of this intimacy, in possession of a new thought of God. In Jesus they had seen something more god-like than their previous conception of God, and the previous idea had to be dropped in favour of a new, more beautiful and more true one. God was no longer a terrible and distant Being only to be appeased by countless sacrifices: He was near beyond all speech to describe, ever ready to welcome the erring, to forgive and to receive: He was ready to do far more than meet men half way: He was, rather, like the shepherd who went out on to the mountains to seek the lost sheep—who even laid down his life for the sheep. He was no longer to be known only through an inner circle of the initiated: He was the people's God, caring for the lowest and for the children with an especial concern: the door to His heart was ever open, and none would be denied admittance who truly sought. He was no longer a tribal or a national God, giving His main attention to a little corner of the world: He was concerned equally for all

the world ; the Samaritan came within His care no less than the Jew ; His messengers were to encircle the wide earth with the proclamation of His Gospel. He was no longer to be thought of as the great Possessor, drawing everything to Himself for His own satisfaction, exacting His dues to the uttermost farthing : He was the Prince of Givers, giving lavishly His very best at whatever cost, not standing on His dignity, but coming near to His people in lowly service. He was no longer the austere Judge, vindicating His holiness by punishment : He was the Saviour, showing Himself in a wealth of forgiving love, never despairing of the most wayward, but ever determined to bring him back that nothing be lost, searching and searching until He find.

May it not even be said that for them the God who spoke with thunders from Sinai, who commanded Agag to be hewed in pieces, and decreed the wholesale slaughter of women and children, had been replaced in some wonderful undreamed-of way by " the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" ? The revolution that took place in those short years transformed the men themselves, and their whole outlook on the world. If God were indeed thus and thus, they must behave as His children. To be like Him meant that their aim was to be the servants of all, not possessors but givers, not judges but saviours,

not remote from men by reason of their great secret, but accessible and full of sympathy for all, not coldly righteous, but passionately forgiving. As the greatness of this revelation became increasingly apparent, is it any wonder that they turned to Jesus with something even surpassing the friendship and loyalty of the early days, and, with reverence and the spirit of worship, acknowledged Him as "the Christ, the Son of the Living God?"

It was not, as has been said, by any process of argument that this new view of God took possession of the first friends of Jesus. He simply, as it were, introduced them to His Father. He knew, with an assurance that nothing could shake, that His Father was ever near, and ever thoughtful for His own, ever tender and pure, the embodiment of all Beauty and Truth, One who could be utterly trusted in life and in death, in great things and in small, who would always touch the highest chords in man's nature, and set them vibrating with a new music. He knew His Father not by outward authority but by inward illumination. He found Him not in some distant past, or in some holy shrine, but in the simple joys of the lowly, and in the inmost place of His own loving heart. Having this knowledge, He infected others with it, and, when they came to see how much He had meant to them, they put Him in a place alone, and sought for some way in which to

express the amazing impression He had made upon their spirits.

May we thus know the Father to-day? Surely we must thus know Him. No other knowledge can satisfy us. In company with Jesus of Nazareth we too can find the Father. We too can have our dull and fettering preconceptions stricken from us to fall away like the shackles they are. We too can find that, as we grow into a new idea of God, into a new and inward knowledge of Him, all life has to be made conformable to that great vision. We too can venture forth upon the life in which we put to the test our Father's love, and are not disappointed. Life may not seem to succeed, it may appear to other eyes just such another failure as that of Jesus of Nazareth. But the new values we have learned from our Father will make us better judges than those who judge us. To be in with the crowd will not be a chief end. To have many possessions will appear to be a danger rather than a delight. To lord it over others will not be the mark of success. But, if we may live in fellowship with our Father, doing our utmost for the Highest, striving simply and sincerely, loving to the last, we shall not have missed the way. And if to this great way we have been led by the Man Christ Jesus, we too may fall at His feet, and, in the wonder of a great love, say, "My Lord and my God!"

THE LIFE THAT IS LIFE INDEED

Though with all tongues of men I speak,
yea, of angels,
And have not Love,
I have but become clanging brass or clashing cymbal,
Yea, though I have utterance inspired,
Though I fathom all mystic secrets, have full illumination,
Though I have utter faith, such as might move mountains.
from their seats,
And have not Love,
Nothing am I.
And though I dole away in charity all my goods,
And though I yield up my body to a death of fire,
And have not Love,
Nothing it availeth me.
Love is long forbearing, is all kindness:
Love knows not jealousy.
Love does not parade her gifts, swells not with self-conceit,
she flouts not decency:
She grasps not at her rights, refuses to take offence, has no
memory for injuries.
She exults not over wrong triumphant, she shows glad sym-
pathy with Truth.
All tolerance is she, all trustfulness, all hope, all strong
endurance.
Love's flower-petals never fall.
Eloquence inspired—for this there shall be no use:
Tongues—they shall be hushed:
Illumination—for this there shall be no use.
Yes, partial is that our illumination, partial our inspiration:
But when cometh the perfect, for the partial there shall be
no use.

Paul's Letter to the Corinthians, translated by A. S. Way.

XIII

THE LIFE THAT IS LIFE INDEED

ALTHOUGH in the present volume it is not possible to deal with the application of "lay religion" in the various departments of life, a few general thoughts may here be suggested, arising directly out of our treatment of the subject, before we attempt to summarise our conclusions. Enough has been said to make it clear that lay religion claims every sphere of life as her own. There is no meaning for us in the phrase, for example, that "business is business," as commonly used when defending an un-Christian act in the course of a business transaction. The Christian ideal is not something to be set up and admired from afar. It is something to be lived out every day with all the attendant risks.

When Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, had set before His followers the majesty of that ideal, He used an illustration that, at once, made His demand upon men clear and insistent. He spoke of two men, one of whom would, indeed, admire the ideal, regard it as something to be aimed at ultimately, but not as practical politics. He was what we call the practical man. He saw the actual conditions and limitations of human life.

His commonsense warned him against the wild idealism of the dreamer. He would keep the same ideal before him, by all means, but he would only apply it when and where the material he had to deal with would stand the strain. We honour such a man for his wisdom and hardheadedness. To Christ he was a fool ; he was building his house upon the sand.

The other side of the picture is the man who " hears these words of mine, and doeth them." Current judgments write this man down a mere dreamer. His head is in the air. He never sees life as it really is. Unpractical and even fanatical, he steers straight for disaster. He is no doubt, in a certain way, admirable, but he is a poor benighted fool. To Christ he seems the truly wise man ; he is building his house upon the rock.

What is the rock ? What fact is it that will stand against all storms, that can be relied upon utterly as the basis of all our practical every-day life ? How can such a course, fraught as it obviously is with grave dangers and with possible disaster, be justified and commended to sane men and women ? There is only one possible answer to such questions. The rock is the never-changing love of the Heavenly Father. The life that is built on this rock must stand. Cast yourself absolutely upon God, see Him as the most substantial fact in the universe, know Him in your heart of hearts as your own

Father, partake of His life and His love, and you can attempt the Christian life with all that it demands. Failing this, the ideal is indeed impossible and almost unthinkable. Failing this, the argument of expediency must, of course, be applied at every turn of the way. Failing this, circumstances will frequently arise under which we shall deliberately adopt a second best policy "even if it mean some considerable postponement of the Christian ideal, and a temporary reversion to that stage of ethic which God did employ, but which He was labouring to leave behind"; we shall have to recognise that "it is not always reactionary to go back or to go slow: the brake is a real instrument of progress."* Unless the most relevant of all facts be taken into account, all the other facts must be weighed and balanced, and every forward step will be halting and uncertain. We say, in our wisdom, that practical politics demands such a careful adjustment. Jesus, in His foolishness, bids us lay hold on God, and leave the consequences to take care of themselves. This is the practical politics of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus did not ask men to do what He Himself shrank from. The distinctive thing about His life is that He made the experiment of so living. Judged by ordinary standards, He failed ignominiously. The Christian

* "The Christian Ethic of War," pp. 27, 28.

conscience finds in the story of the resurrection the vindication of His superb faith, His great experiment in loving. Even those who find it difficult to accept the physical resurrection, as commonly understood, are compelled in some way to explain the change from the discredited band of followers, disheartened and scattered when their Master was taken and crucified, to the little group of eager, confident men and women who embarked with such sublime courage on the task of winning the world, who faced scorn and opposition, persecution and death, and who, before some of them died, saw their message spreading through a large part of the civilised world. Whatever the judgment of His own time upon the obscure Galilean, executed under Pontius Pilate for blasphemy and treachery, history cannot regard His experiment as a failure. It had in it the seeds of lasting success.

And why? Was it not because of this utter confidence in the Father's Love? Has not that confidence been justified? With this key in our hands it is for every man and woman to unlock the mysteries of his own life. The question will not be, How far dare I go in following the Christian ideal? What degree of faithfulness will the world stand? How may I so guide my actions as to advance the cause of truth without courting absolute disaster? But rather, What should I do

under these circumstances if I utterly believed in the Father's love? Supposing His love and power to be fully available for me now, and knowing what I do of His perfect will, how shall I best obey Him? It is by making this assumption that we come in the fullest way to know God. The life lived on the basis of the spiritual realities is the life that becomes increasingly assured of those realities. Human life, being made for fellowship with God, finds its fulfilment in utter dependence upon Him. Live a cramped, compromising life, always guided by what you think possible to your own weak will, and you will always be hesitating and uncertain about the Father's love. Push out into the great adventure of Christian living, attempt what is manifestly beyond you, impossible, indeed, without the Father's help, and you will know how great that help can be, the verification will be established within your own deepest consciousness. Such seems to have been the call of Jesus of Nazareth. This is the life that is life indeed.

But there is something more than this to be said. Jesus summons men not only to an attitude towards God. He brings them into the life of God. Love does not only help us to understand and trust in one another. It is the means by which life is communicated. In a real sense, husband and wife become one through love. Friendship means a shared

life. Personality is not truly fulfilled in isolation. It needs this sharing of itself to realise its hidden possibilities. We are touching here the great mystical secret of the Christian faith. Paul says : " We are made full in Him." His great and constantly recurring phrase was " In Christ. " What did he mean by it ? He meant that he had found himself, his own true life, in fellowship—that Christ had entered into his personality, and had actually brought to him the gift of God's own life. The finest thing we can do is not to pass on our possessions to others, but to pass on something of ourselves, to share our personality in sympathetic love. Can we doubt that the Father's joy will also be a great sharing of Himself, something transcending anything we can experience as merely between two human personalities ? Need we wonder if to share Himself with us He gave His own Son, He made Himself known to us in terms of our own life, He even expressed Himself in the supreme sacrifice of the life poured out in love ? This, at least, is what the Cross has meant and brought to many child-like spirits. They have not concerned themselves with putting into any logical form the wonderful thing that has happened, but, in a perfectly simple and real way, they have found themselves lifted above themselves, the trust in the Father's love has been justified, not so much by success in

any particular undertaking, as by an inrush of new life that has altered their standards, fitted them to serve their fellows, softened and strengthened their characters, brought a richer meaning into every common act.

This may be mysticism—but it is not the mysticism of the few select souls called to a superior type of sainthood. It is open to all. It is for the everyday life of man. It wears well in the workshop. It is no hothouse growth. To plead for a lay religion is not to plead for a religion without the supernatural, but it is to plead for one without the unnatural. It is just because we all need God, and need Him so much, that we cannot afford to see religion in the hands of the few, however good or learned they may be. We claim the whole of religion for the whole family of men, and for all their life. This is what Jesus did. "Religion," says Professor Oman, "may prophesy in His name, or even in His name do many wonderful works, yet nothing can be more certain about His ministry than His repudiation of a religion which only the learned could understand, only its professional representatives maintain, and only the leisured practise, and His demand from the fisherfolk and the day-labourers of a better righteousness."*

We have seen that the real question for our day is whether the reconstruction of life

* "Grace and Personality," pp. 226, 227.

is to be on a spiritual basis or on a material one. There is a terrible danger of so organising men's lives for efficiency, so drilling them for military service, so educating them for material success, that the joyous spontaneity of life is lost, and men go wearily and restlessly about their work, seeking to find their true life in that which lies outside the daily task. Long ago a seer saw that the deepest failure of his people lay not so much in their luxury and deceit, though these were serious enough, not so much in any open disavowal of God, as in the habit of mind that left God out of account. They had "said in their heart, the Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil." They simply went ahead with their life, without reckoning on any interference from God, either for good or ill. The criticism of society made by Zephaniah is peculiarly modern. Our researches into nature, our explanation of everything under the sun, have left us *blasé*, without any use for the divine. Such a life becomes, sooner or later, unspeakably mean and barren. It cannot rise to any high levels; its best ideals seem unattainable; its hopes are little more than calculations of probabilities; it has no large spaces to give light and air; it is like the cramped life of the overcrowded city slum.

Against such a small and sordid life the human spirit cries out in an agony of impotent

longing. It longs for the life that is life indeed. The answer of Jesus is that this larger life is only to be found in God our Father, and that the broad highway that takes us into it is love, the love that was revealed to men most perfectly in His own teaching, life and death. Do we demand reality? Love breaks down the unreal, tears away the shams, and brings us face to face with ourselves. Do we demand adventure? Love leads us forward fearless to the most splendid enterprise of enthroning her in all the departments of our varied life. Do we demand freedom? Love unlooses the chains that bind our spirits, and sets us in a world where there are no limits but such as love herself imposes. Do we demand fellowship? In love, and only in love, can we truly find one another, and work together for the common good. Do we demand a purpose worthy of life? Love calls us freely to give our lives for others. Do we demand harmony? We shall find it by the way of love—no other path will do. Do we demand righteousness? Love points us to a righteousness that is all forgiveness, that wins men to purity by her forbearance and patience. Do we demand power? Love says, Be content with me, and you shall be more than conquerors. Do we demand a Leader? Love offers us a Friend more tender, and a Counsellor more sure, than any we could have dreamed of. Do we

demand a knowledge of God Himself? Love opens to us the Father's heart, and in Him we find all we need.

And this love is no mere abstraction; it is essentially concrete; it is related to the particular, and not merely to the general. It is as we love John Smith and his wife and child that we discover the meaning of life, and enter into fellowship with God. It is as we hate or despise or patronise or neglect John Smith and his wife and child that we break our fellowship with God. Loving means making experiments all the time. It is the path by which we discover the true meaning of life. No mere thinking about God, however clever we may be, will serve the purpose. More of God is to be found in the simplest act of a loving heart than in the most profound thesis of the theologian.

> "From a baby's hand
> Shut on his finger, one shall understand
> All knowledge, clasped in Love's immensity."

The book in the New Testament that most strongly insists on love as being the essential nature of God is the book above all others that denies all meaning to love save as it expresses itself in human relationship. "If a man say I love God and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen cannot love God whom he hath not seen" (1 John iv. 20). Only through love can we maintain right relations

with our fellows, and only through loving can we come to know inwardly the spiritual realities. When I love I do a God-like thing, and I experience in loving my fellow-man, in helping him, in putting myself out to serve him, in the lowliest act of true spontaneous fellowship, something of the divine spirit at work in and through my personality. Without love all prophecy and all philanthropy are vain. However vast the sum of my benevolences, they will pass away if, in making them, I have set at nought the demands of my brother upon my sympathy, if I have treated him either as a chattel or as a mere object of charity, as a "hand" or a "case" rather than as a man.*

One may be asked to define love. But

* Since this chapter was written "Studies in Christianity" by A. Clutton-Brock, has been published. One of the main theses of this volume is the point here emphasised. It is worthy of the closest study. A brief extract will serve to illustrate Mr. Clutton-Brock's argument and the present chapter. He says:

> "He (Christ) warns us that we cannot be aware of the truth except through love. And so it may be hidden from the wise and prudent—from those who would rather attain to some consistency than be aware of the truth in all its seeming inconsistency—and yet be revealed to babes, to the simple who love. For those who love know it to be true. The truth happens to them so that they do not need to have it proved. They are in love with the particular and with the universal, and the more they are aware of one, the more they become aware of the other. They do not need to rob the particular of reality so that they may give it to the universal. That which seems impossible in cold thought happens to them in the warmth of love. They are like the great artist who attains to unity through richness; no one can say how he does it, but in his work it is done."

from such a task even the wisest may shrink. Love transcends definition. It can but be known through experience. Even the best of definitions is apt to appear cold and abstract. The man who does not know love, who does not yield himself to its power, can no more be convinced by logic of its meaning and power than can the blind man be convinced of the beauty of the landscape.*

How, then, is the world to be brought into the way of love ? How shall those who persistently reject the offer of love be turned to the Father ? There is no way but the way of love itself. But that way is no doubtful, desperate, last resort. It is the way—the one way—by which the full force of divine power can break into our enervated and estranged human nature. Paul, in one of those daring flights of the imagination that baffle the commentator and delight the child-

* The following definition by Dr. A. E. Garvie is given as at least helping to clear away some of the misconceptions in regard to the use of the word that may be in the minds of some readers :—

> " The ideal of the mind is truth. The ideal of the feelings is blessedness. The ideal of the will is holiness. Love is the whole self, mind, feelings and will, giving itself to, and finding itself in another, and so involves a judgment of worth, a sentiment of interest (pain or pleasure), and a purpose of good. There is no antithesis of holiness and love. No love is perfect that does not seek to impart holiness ; and no holiness is perfect that does not seek to impart itself in love. Christian love is tested in forgiveness, and measured in sacrifice. The offer of forgiveness at the cost even of sacrifice awakens penitence, and the fact of forgiveness results when the will to forgive in grace and the will to repent in faith, restore the broken fellowship."

spirit, speaks of all creation groaning and travailing in pain. He tells us that "the earnest expectation of creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God." To-day we see creation groaning indeed under the illwill of man. Every discovery of nature's secrets, all her mystery, her beauty, her quiet strength, wrested from its proper purpose, and made the handmaiden of our insensate folly, in one great orgy of mutual destruction. What terrible wizardry is at work to mar what is so lovely, to use for such ghastly purposes that which is available to enrich and glorify our common life? The answer lies in the perverted will of men. It is we who have brought this blight upon the universe. May it not rest with us—with the sons of God—to redeem this world from so terrible a bondage?

But we have done more than misuse the forces of nature. We have prostituted the very highest powers of mind and spirit. When has there been self-sacrifice such as that which we have seen in these four years of war? When have men made, by their loving service, a more magnificent appeal to God Himself? Some years before the war, Prof. Eucken wrote words that have come back to one again and again with something of prophetic significance. They are these :—

"The only antidote, then, to the soullessness of modern culture and the starving of all inward life is a return to the deepening and quickening forces of religion. But our

statement of the case has shown further that the revival of religion leads direct to Christianity. The world-service which Christianity has rendered in the building up of a new world and the elevation of mankind is absolutely indispensable for religious progress. The present day, in particular, with its moral slackness, stands in urgent need of rousing and regeneration through the moral earnestness of Christianity. In the bosom of Christianity unfathomable forces are slumbering, forces which have by no means lived themselves out, and are still capable of breaking forth again and driving human life into new channels with an irresistible and elemental violence. The contact of divine and human begets daimonic forces which may work either for revolution and renewal or for destruction and desolation. To gain control of these, and lead them into the paths of productive work, is one main task of the religious community. But the particular way of apprehending the task may, in the lapse of time, become narrow and stereotyped. Then arises the need of appealing to the primal force itself, and summoning this to a task of new creation."*

Truly the appeal to the primal force itself has been made. Has it but worked for destruction and desolation? Has some strange twist prevented even this amazing self-sacrifice and heroism from working the revolution and renewal we so sorely need? Whatever the appearance, let us trust not. Let us believe that, behind all this devastation, something is arising, some building not made with hands, that shall outlast all the sorrow and loss of this awful period.

But it will not be enough to hope for the best. We must see to it that the earnest expectation of creation is fulfilled by nothing

* "Can we still be Christians," p. 211.

less than the revealing of the sons of God. These are they who are led by the Spirit of God, who have learned the infant speech of trust and love by which they cry "Abba Father." Not by the blazoning of His will upon the heavens shall the Father redeem the world from "the soullessness of modern culture and the starving of all inward life." No, it is we—we who have brought her into bondage—who must be the redeemers. The appeal is from the human to the divine, from children to their Father.

If the primal forces of which Prof. Eucken speaks are but warring spirits in a universal pantheon, the answer to such an appeal must be confused, and will lead to no sure hope of unity and liberty. If the primal force be the inexorable destiny of Mohammedanism, the answer will be only a demand for utter and abject submission—Islam. If the primal force be the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the answer will bring hope to all the world. In Him the family shall be united, in Him joy shall come back to His children, in Him we shall find the meaning and the rich possibilities of human life. The primal force is Love—a Father's love. It shall break forth to the task of new creation through the simple, honest courageous lives of countless humble men and women, who "love because He first loved us."

EPILOGUE

THE TWO FLOWERS.

A MAN and a woman lived side by side in a dull, drab street in a great manufacturing city. The houses were all just alike: there was nothing to distinguish one from the other. In front of each house there was a tiny patch of garden; but it seemed as though nothing would grow in it. The smoke and dust of the city killed the few flowers that were planted by the inhabitants.

One day a strolling pedlar came along the street, and offered for sale some very small seeds. The price which he asked for them was high, and scarcely anyone in the street would buy them. The man and the woman went out, and, as he talked to them, a strange feeling came over them that the seeds would be worth buying, so each of them bought one, and planted it in the tiny patch of garden in front of the house.

Many months passed by. Day after day the man and the woman watered the seed, and at last a tiny shoot appeared. Each watched over his little plant, tending it with care, and

eagerly noting its slow growth. After many more months, the plants grew up and developed. There were many beautiful leaves on them, and at the top of each could be seen a tiny flowerbud. One day, to their inexpressible joy, the bud opened, and there appeared a most lovely flower—more lovely than anything that either of them had ever seen. The whole street seemed to be changed by the presence of those two flowers. It was no longer a common, dull, ordinary street. It was the wonder of all who passed, and every house was lightened by the beauty of the flowers.

But not many days after the flower had blossomed, dark clouds gathered on the horizon, and with anxious faces the man and woman looked out. The wind rose: great drops of rain began to fall: the thunder could be heard in the distance. Each feared what would happen to his glorious flower. At last, the man, seeing that the storm was about to burst in all its fury, rushed out into the garden, gathered his flower, and set it in a beautiful vase in his room. Then he called to the woman, told her to beware, that the storm was about to come, and that surely it would batter the flower and spoil it. But the woman refused to pick her flower. To her it seemed that the seed had been given to her not for herself but for the street, and that, even if it must die, she could not take it into her house

and keep it for herself alone. So she sat and looked out upon the storm. One by one the petals fell from the flower, it was battered and torn, and she wept to see her beautiful flower gone.

Within a few days, the man's flower withered and died too, and no more flowers were put forth by the plants which grew in the gardens. But it happened that, where the woman's flower had been, there developed a fruit, which grew and ripened. One day it burst, and out of it thousands of little seeds were caught in the air, and carried all down the street. They settled in nooks and crannies in the other gardens, and there took root; and to-day, if you shall walk down that street, you will find those flowers blooming in many a garden. Far and wide through the town the fame of the street has spread, and the woman who would not pick her flower has been rewarded. The man, too, looks on with gladness, though sometimes with regret that he also did not leave his flower when the storm was about to burst. Long after, when the pedlar passed that way again, he smiled. The woman asked him what the name of the flower was, and he told her that it was called "Overcome evil with good."

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